

# THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

## A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

*Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.*

**No. 21.**

**Price, Five Cents.**



JESSE'S PISTOL FLASHED, AND BARROWS THREW UP BOTH HANDS AND DROPPED TO THE GROUND.—(CHAPTER I.)



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# Jesse James' Exploits.

By W. B. LAWSON.

## CHAPTER I.

### ACROSS THE ALKALI DESERT.

"Then you won't do it, Bink?"

"I'll be hanged if I will! I reckon now, Jess, I'm as good a man as you be!"

Crack!

A pistol flashed and a bullet sped through the air, striking the heavy buckle of a belt worn by Bink Barrows, robber, gambler and all-around desperado.

Barrows threw up both hands and uttered a groan, then dropped to the ground, where he lay on his face, in spite of the fact that the bullet had glanced off harmlessly.

The glare of sunlight on the basalt cliff just ahead was in the marksman's eyes, and as the puff of smoke died away, he remarked, coolly:

"That settles him! Men, how many more of you are getting ready to defy my orders?"

The speaker was Jesse James, the notorious bandit. He looked around upon a group of parched and sun-burned men and scowled like a thundercloud.

"I reckon now, Jess, thar won't be no disputin' yer," remarked a man with a red beard and bloodshot eyes, who was leaning back in the chaparral, with his evil glance fixed on the bandit. "I reckon thet thar example is enough fer ther rest on us! Got any objections now ter my turnin' ther poor cuss over?"

He made a lazy movement to rise as he spoke, but the snap of a pistol hammer stopped him.

"Let him alone!" warned the outlaw. "You didn't suppose I could miss at ten feet, did you?"

"You ain't ther missin' kind, Jess. Everybody knows that," said another of the group, promptly. "It sarved Bink right. He's in ther gang, an' he'd orter obey orders. What was ter hinder his holdin' up ther Maricopa stage, anyhow? There won't be more'n a handful of passengers, an' it was right in his way."

"He was a disgrace to the gang. Remember that, the whole lot of you, when you get thinkin' of balkin'."

"We ain't doin' no sech thinkin', Jess. We'll stan' by ter ther bitter end," said the red-whiskered fellow again.



"You understand what's wanted of you, I reckon," said the outlaw again, straightening his broad shoulders as he spoke and facing his men.

A nod from the crew of cutthroats followed, and then the whole group, eight in all, rose from the dense brush where they had been sitting and moved slowly toward an adobe hut a little distance away, from which emanated a savory odor of stewed jack rabbit.

As they disappeared within the hut, Bink Barrows moved softly in the brush, and as he assumed a more comfortable position, he chuckled softly.

"So you ain't the missin' kind, hey?" he muttered. "I reckon now ther sun was in yer eyes, Jess, or yer'd hev seen whar thet bullet landed."

He raised his head and peered over the bushes across a patch of alkaline soil that separated him from the hut, and his nostrils expanded as he smelled the jack rabbit.

"I'm cussed hungry an' no mistake," he growled again. Then he deliberately turned his back upon the hut and crept through the brush in the opposite direction.

A hundred yards of crawling brought him to a dense growth of chaparral at the base of another scale-covered cliff, and he was able to rise to his feet and make better headway.

"So Bink Barrows is dead, is he?" he asked, aloud. "Waal, I reckon now, Jess James, it would be better fer you if he was"

He stopped suddenly in his remarks, for he had stumbled upon a form behind a clump of mesquite, and like a flash his hand fell upon the butt of his weapon.

"Lynch me if it ain't an Injun," he muttered, as the man did not move and he was able to look him over. "Ther poor devil is tuckered out. Now whar in thunder did he hail from? He's er sneakin' fer Tucson, I reckon, an' he's an Apache, by ther etarnal! I 'low now it's my solemn duty ter put an end ter him!"

He drew his revolver and aimed it at the sleeping Indian, then, shaking his head, he replaced the weapon in his hip pocket.

"Thet thar won't do," he argued, aloud. "When a man

is dead he ain't er shootin' off pistols. If I was ter blaze away now, I'd hev Jess on my heels in er minute. I reckon I'd best slit his windpipe an' then git erlong toward ther mountains if I've any notion of reachin' water by sundown."

He bent and laid hold of the handle of a knife which protruded from his bootleg, and the next second a terrific blow from the rear sent him sprawling over the Indian.

As he struck the ground a heavy foot was planted in the middle of his back, pinning him 'down to the ground as flat as a flounder.

"Curse your cowardice! So you would kill a sleeping man, would you?" asked an indignant voice. "It's lucky I saw you, you miserable sneak! Take his weapons there, Bob; there's a bowie and two pistols. Now then, let out so much as a whimper and I'll give you a dose of your own medicine! I'll run you chock up to the handle of your own pig-sticker and leave you here to feed the coyotes!"

There was no answer from the prostrate outlaw, and the two young men who had been hiding in the bushes looked him over critically.

A few words passed between them in a foreign tongue; then the first speaker lifted his foot a little.

"Now, you rascal, we'll give you a chance for your life," he said, sternly. "Tell us who is yonder in that shack and we'll show you mercy. Lie to us, and your minutes are numbered!"

The outlaw turned his head so that he could look up into the two determined faces above him, and at that second the sleeping Indian awoke and drew himself up to a sitting posture.

"Who be yer?" asked Barrows, after a second's thought.

The two young men exchanged glances, but did not answer, and the outlaw stared hard from one to the other.

"I reckon now ye're detectives," he said, after a minute. "Ye're a-huntin', fer some one."

"I should say we'd found some one," said the first speaker, grimly. "But we don't mind you knowing that



"we are Pinkerton men, seeing we've got you in our power. Now own up. You are one of the James gang, aren't you? Tell the truth and we'll give you a chance for your life."

He raised the knife above the outlaw's head as he spoke, and then balanced it on the tip of one finger, directly over him, so that the slightest motion would send the keen point into the bleary eyes that were looking up at him.

"Hold on! Put up thet thar an' I'll make a clean breast of it," said Barrows, quickly. "I'll tell every secret of ther gang thet I know! I hate Jess like er snake, an' hyars my chance ter git even!"

Will Star, the detective, put up the knife, but kept one hand on his revolver, while he allowed the outlaw to assume a more comfortable position.

The Apache trailer moved forward stealthily in the grass and sniffed toward the adobe hut, the roof of which could be seen above a clump of manzanita, and the second detective stood ready for action in the rear of their prisoner.

"Jess is in thar all right, an' he's got seven of his best men with him," began the fellow. "The horses air yender in the corral behind the shack, an' they're bound for Tucson, with er deal on at Maricopa, ef they're lucky enough to git thar!"

"Is Dan Elkin's in the gang?" asked Star's companion.

Barrows chuckled and shook his head as he answered:

"Naw! Elkins an' Jess can't agree! They're both high-cockalorums, an' they git ter scrappin'! They're on ther same lay now, an' I was on ther way ter hunt up Elkins an' I'arn what I could of how he's workin'. This hyar meetin' has delayed me a leetle, stranger!"

The detectives laughed and winked at each other.

"What shape are the horses in?" he asked.

The outlaw shook his head as he answered:

"They ain't seen water for six hours now, stranger! Jess reckens on reachin' Coyote Spring by sundown!"

"And how are the men? Fresh or played out?" went on the detective.

"They're sound as bullets! We've seen this hyar route afore, stranger! No danger of ther James gang drop-pin' except by er bullet! Ther's swag enough ahead ter keep 'em movin'!"

"Could you be induced to betray Jess if we paid you good money?" asked Gray, coolly.

"I reckon now I could!"

"We'll give you a bag of gold if you'll tell us how to detain Jess and his gang in that hut for twenty-four hours longer!"

"Steal the horses!"

The answer came promptly and was evidently honest, but the detectives looked grave over the proposition.

"It can't be done, if there's eight of them," said Star; "but there's your money, and now you must help us with another suggestion.

He drew a small coin bag from his pocket and handed it to the fellow, who looked genuinely surprised as he put it in his pocket.

"I 'low now it kin be done," went on the fellow, after he had recovered from his astonishment; "an', as yer seem ter be on ther square, I ain't erbove helpin' yer do it!"

He rose to a sitting posture as he spoke, and Star stepped back, but did not remove his finger from the trigger of his pistol.

"Git ther Injun around ter ther corral," went on the fellow, "then one of yer blaze away ter ther front of ther shack an' yell till yer make 'em think ther devil's er comin'! I reck'n now ther redskin is slick enough ter sneak ther hosses all right, an' if yer quick on yer legs thar's a chance fer yer, strangers!"

"I've got a better plan than that," said Star, grinning. "Get up and peel off those duds! I want to play outlaw!"

He jerked Barrows to his feet, and in a minute he had forced the fellow to exchange garments with him.

Turning the outlaw's coat inside out, he made quite a change in its appearance, which would keep it from being recognized too easily by the rest of the gang; then he put on a pair of blue goggles and pulled the battered canvas hat well down over his forehead.



Then, with a glance for a signal, the two detectives sprang at the fellow and jerked his arms behind him, tying his wrists together.

Then Bob Gray drew a package from his pocket and tore off the wrapper.

A large cowbell with the wrapper tied tightly was exposed to view, and, keeping it silent, he succeeded in fastening a string to it and hanging it around the outlaw's neck.

"Now, then!" ordered Star, pulling back the hammer of his pistol, "I want you to make tracks for the front door of the shack yonder! If you stop or go in any other direction I'll send a bullet after you!"

The Indian slunk away as they spoke, but the outlaw hesitated, his eyes shooting evil lights toward the two grinning detectives.

The detective sprang upon a rock glistening with alkaline scales, so that he could command a view of the adobe hut, and, picking up a Winchester repeater that lay upon the ground, he turned it in the direction which he intended Barrows to follow.

"Now! One! two! three! Go!" ordered Star, leveling a revolver at the outlaw's head.

There was no misunderstanding the situation. The outlaw was between two fires.

With a desperate look in his small eyes, he set off toward the hut, the brazen bell making a strange racket for that section of the country.

"They're after him! Where's Sparrow Wing?" cried Star, as he witnessed the result of the maneuver.

The outlaws were pouring out of the hut, looking in every direction for the disturbance.

"They've seen him! Great snakes, see him go!" whispered Star again, as he ducked down into the bushes. "That was a clever dodge to put him into my duds. They'll think they've tagged a new species of bird until they get near enough to see his features!"

A crackling in the bushes could be heard at that minute, and, leaving their post of observation, the two detectives

made their way down the ridge under the cliff until they met the Apache, who was leading their horses.

"Me no git um Fastfoot; him inside shack!" he growled, savagely.

"He means Fleetwind, Jesse James' own horse! These will do all right! Come on, old man! Too bad we can't wait to see the fun, but we must get on toward Tucson. We can reach Marshal Simpson from there and we need reinforcements!"

They sprang upon the bare backs of the sure-footed animals, which, fortunately, were bridled, and, after following the ridge under the cliff for half a mile, struck back into the trail, which was cooler and greener. Walking their horses, they looked back over their shoulders, but the sun dropped out of sight without their catching a glimpse of any one pursuing them.

Meanwhile the outlaw, in canvas trousers and a cork helmet, with a cowbell tied around his neck, had been lassoed by one of the bandits, after a sharp chase through the chaparral.

"I'll be hanged ef it ain't Bink!" roared the outlaw who roped him; "Now whar the devil did he git thet thar rig? I reckon now, Jess, you did miss him arter all. Ther feller ain't got er scratch!"

Jesse James strode out of the hut, and took a sharp glance at the supposed dead man of his gang, then he instantly turned and surveyed the bushes.

He was in time to catch a glimpse of the top of Star's head as it disappeared in the distance, and the next second there was a rush for the corral to count the horses.

"Curse my soul!" bellowed the outlaw, as he reached the inclosure and found a member of his gang lying before the gate with a knife sticking in his heart.

"Bill's been stabbed, and by an Injun, boys! There's the print of his moccasin in the sand! After 'em, boys! They're made for the brook! After 'em and riddle the devils, curse 'em!"

Acting with his usual quickness in emergencies, he rushed back to the hut and led his famous horse, Fleetwind, out into the clearing.



"Lucky she wasn't with the others! They'd have taken her first of any," he growled; then, after he was in the saddle he cast a last glance about him.

The men had stood Bink Barrows up against a rock and were holding a revolver to his head, and Bink was telling the story of his recent experience as fast as his tongue could rattle it off.

"I reckon now, thet thar's a straight yarn, Jess," said a fellow by the name of Peters, who was more cool-headed than the others. "Ther bullet struck his buckle an' winded him fer a time, but he played possum ter keep yer from tryin' another shot, an' when he crawled through ther bresh, he found them thar devils waitin'."

"They was sleuthhounds, Jess! Pinkerton men at that!" broke in Barrows, who was cunning enough to improve his opportunity to get back into his chief's good graces. "I reckon now I set 'em a chase," he continued, foxily.

"I 'lowed yer was only a gang of hoss thieves bound fer Tombstone, an' bein' as how they're tenderfeet, they've made a break fer Tucson an' ther Maricopa route, thinkin' as how Jess'll be hevin' his eye in thet thar direction."

Jesse James watched his face, but could not read the lie in the words, and a moment later he chuckled over the story.

"That means that Elkins will run afoul of 'em when he tackles the stage, an' gives me a chance to do a little job when the Tombstone go-cart heaves along in this direction! Ha! Ha! I'm glad Bink run across the devils! There's time enough to get square about the horses later!"

"They've took three, an' thar's ten left! Now, as thar happens ter be 'leven in this hyar gang——"

"Bink can ride one of the mustangs with Peters," broke in the red-whiskered man.

The alkali of the desert was getting in its fine work, and the outlaws knew that they must move on to greener soil if they expected to save their horses; so hastily mounting, they started down the ridge, following the detectives' steps, with Bink and Peters riding a mustang together.

A mile from the shack, Jesse James suddenly rose in his saddle, and giving a hoarse cry, at the same time pointing to a moving cloud of dust in the distance.

"Hold on, boys! It's a herd of wild horses!" he said, promptly. "They're after water, and if there's a 'Jack' among them they'll find it, too! You can't fool those animals! Slow up a bit and watch them!"

There was a general movement of the men to uncoil their lariats, but they slowed up and waited until their horses neighed uneasily.

The cloud of dust came nearer and nearer, and, as the drove swept by an eighth of a mile ahead, the horsemen urged their tired horses on in the same direction.

The desert was blossoming out in verdure now, the sage brush looked greener and the mesquite was more abundant.

Riding slowly down a slope they reached the dried bed of a river that looked almost as arid as the desert itself, only that the chaparral was denser.

Here they found the intelligent "Jack" pawing the ground vigorously, while the group of wild mares stood back and waited.

"Strange how them horses scent water," grunted Bink, as the magnificent animals suddenly crowded around the hole and bent their heads to the muddy water that had oozed up from somewhere.

Jesse James said nothing, but urging his horse forward, he selected the finest animal in the group and creeping upon it softly, he dropped his lariat over it.

There was a scream that was almost human, and a wild rush followed, as the rest of the herd dashed off across the desert, leaving a cloud of dust behind them.

"Drop a noose around her leg, Frank!" shouted the outlaw, as the mare backed suddenly and lifted her hind feet.

Frank James, the brother and right-hand man of the famous outlaw, threw his lariat instantly, and a moment later the wild mare was down with the horsemen crowding around her.

At that second a dense growth of mesquite, within



forty feet of the spot, parted and three Winchester repeaters were turned full upon the party.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

The shots were fired simultaneously and, as a bullet whistled past Jesse James' ear, he dropped his lariat and bounded back into his saddle.

"Curse 'em! It's the sleuths! After 'em, men!" he cried.

Another volley of shots followed and three of the outlaws dropped from their saddles, while four horses fell dead in their tracks, carrying their riders with them.

The wild mare was on her feet in a second, dashing away across the desert, dragging the two lariats after her as trophies of her victory.

Jesse James rose in his stirrups and emptied two weapons at the bushes, and a true Indian yell showed that he had found a victim.

Then he, too, dashed away across the plains, yelling for his men to follow, for he did not know how much of an enemy was in the bushes. As he was retreating, a bullet ploughed a furrow across his neck and forced him to grip his saddle to keep from falling.

Five minutes later the two detectives emerged from the bushes, leaving a dead Indian behind them, and making their way to the spot, began to count their victims.

"Two dead and one injured, besides four dead horses," said Star, gravely. "That fellow with my togs on got away and so did the James boys, by thunder!"

"You winged Jess all right! He had to hold on like grim death to keep from pitching from the saddle! Now we'll water the nags, and lope along! No danger of that rascal stopping if he's so badly in need of water!

"Those fellows did not forget to rob the dead of their pistols! There ain't a bullet left!" said Star, as he turned over the bodies.

"Here's a knife," Gray answered, as he discovered an

ugly looking bowie. "I'll take it along! It may come in handy."

They led their horses out of a dense growth of mesquite, and watered them at the muddy pool, then rode on down the trail, leading the third horse behind them.

Darkness was falling rapidly, but for some little distance they could trace the outlaws, who seemed to be heading directly for Tucson.

A large amount of gold, mostly in dust and nuggets, was about to be shipped from this point, but before it could be placed in the charge of railroad officials there was a journey by mule train from the nearest refinery.

Jesse James had planned to intercept this team at a desolate spot along the route, while Dan Elkins and his crew of cutthroats were planning to attack it from another quarter.

Which of the bandit gangs would be victorious they could not guess, but the detectives were there to baffle both, if the thing could be done, and to capture or kill the outlaw leaders, if possible.

The Yankee outlaw was on the Mexican border at last reports, while the noted Missourian had just left Colorado, and was in reality skulking across Arizona in disguise, while every governor and sheriff east of the Sierras was on the outlook for him.

It was a dangerous job, and so far the detectives had met with poor success, for it was their first experience with the fearful alkali desert.

"We're tenderfeet, all right, and that's no joke either," muttered Star, as he dropped from his horse at last, and found that the soles of his feet were blistered.

"Thank Heaven we're near a spring!" was the answer, as Gray detected an animal path leading straight through the dry brush, that was high enough to afford them some shelter.

There was hardly a sound as the minutes passed, except the creaking of the saddles, then the weird bark of a coyote came over the desert.

"Hark! It may be a coyote, and it may be a signal," whispered Star. "Those outlaws are expert at that busi-



ness! If they are stranded it would be a good way of waking up the coyotes and following their wake to the nearest water."

"By Jove! I believe you are right," said Gray, as he listened to similar barks coming from different directions.

"I'm sure of it, Bob! There it goes again!"

As he spoke he raised his head and gave the well-known cry, doing it so cleverly that in an instant a chorus of the animals answered it.

"Hark! There's a terrible wolf!" broke in Star, as another sharper bark came over the waste. "We're in for it, old fellow! We'll soon have the whole menagerie!"

"Sh! There's something coming! Look at the horses!" cried Gray, softly.

Star rose to his feet and bent his head to listen, and at that second he heard a growl that fairly startled him.

There was some sort of beast approaching that was new to that section—what it was he could not tell, but he cocked his Winchester, as he waited.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OVERTURNED STAGE.

Gray caught his companion's arm suddenly, and moved the gun a little.

"Let her go! The beast, whatever it is, is behind that cactus!"

A low growl followed, and Star blazed away. In a second there was a tremendous crackling in the bushes.

"I winged him all right! I'm going to follow him up!" cried Star, darting ahead.

But Gray had already caught sight of a dark object scudding from bush to bush across the sand, and a moment later he gave a yell of astonishment.

"Hello! It's an Injun! Halt, or I'll fire!" he ordered, stopping short and lifting his weapon.

The fellow wheeled instantly and came slowly back, crossing the moonlit patches with that peculiar stealthy movement which a redskin always exhibits when he is on the warpath.

"It's a Navajo, by thunder!" exclaimed Star, under his breath. "Ten to one he's on the track of an Apache trailer!"

When the Indian came near the detectives, the wily redskin sunk upon one knee and shook his head sullenly.

For some time, all efforts to make him talk were futile. Finally one of the detectives addressed him in the Navajo tongue, and by degrees they got out of him that he had been driving the stage from Tombstone to Tucson, and that it had been wrecked an hour before! Held up by one man, he said, and left stranded a mile to the east!

An hour later they were on the very edge of a cliff, peering over into a ravine that was blocked here and there with scaly boulders, so that more than a third of its length was lost in shadow.

"Here's where the stage went over, he says!" called Star, who had been halted by the Indian.

The two detectives dropped to the ground, but the horse that the Indian was riding was tied to his own. Star did not let go his hold upon his own horse's bridle.

At that minute a cry came echoing up from the depths below, and this was answered by another and another.

"A woman, by Jove!" exclaimed Star, as he listened. "It's lucky we came old man!"

Then he turned to the redskin and asked:

"How can we get down there?"

The redskin uttered a grunt, and then leaned low over his horse's neck as he guided it down the steep side of the cliff to a sort of gully filled with the alkaline soil, which was not quite so hard or dry as that on the ridge above it.

After five minutes of careful riding they came upon the dead body of a mule, and a few yards farther on the whole team lay dead and huddled in a heap together.

Then the outlines of the lumbering coach suddenly rose up before them.

"Halloa! Is any one here?" called out Star, at the



top of his lungs, and a pitiful cry from the ruins of the coach answered him.

Dropping from their horses, the detectives were making for the coach when Gray glanced back over his shoulder to give an order to the Indian.

He was in time to see the flash of a knife blade in the moonlight, then as the redskin cut the lariat that bound the two horses together and made a dash back up the ravine, he drew his knife and threw it after him. The knife sped true to its mark, and struck in the redskin's chest. With a yell the Indian dropped from the saddle, and as the horse was too exhausted to run, the detective tied the three together and led them a little distance, leaving them in an inky spot between two enormous boulders.

"It's a young girl, and she's a beauty! The rest are dead!" was the remark that greeted him as he returned to his companions. Then a voice that was wonderfully calm in the face of such danger said briefly:

"We were held up by a highwayman! The driver was shot, and the mules got frightened and backed us over the cliff. There were several bags of gold dust stolen from the coach, and the strong box contained quite a sum of money."

"Are you hurt?" asked Star, stepping close to the girl.

"Only bruised, I think! I was unconscious at first! Oh, it was awful to see them die, one after another!"

As she spoke she pointed to three prostrate bodies near the ruins of the coach.

"Who was guilty of this deed? Do you know?" asked Gray.

"It was Jesse James who did it! One of the passengers knew him. He was all alone, I am sure of it now, although he told us that a dozen men were concealed behind the boulders."

"Was the driver an Indian?" asked Star, curiously and with a glance towards the spot where the fellow was lying.

"Oh, no! He was Hank Doe, a native of Tombstone. I knew him well! He fought like a tiger, but Jesse James killed him!"

The two detectives examined their pistols, and then felt in their belts and were chagrined to find that they were almost without ammunition.

"We must——" began Star, when Gray interrupted him with a shrill whisper:

"Look up yonder, Star! The scoundrels have tracked us!"

Star looked up the ravine and saw the dark forms of several horsemen outlined faintly against the sky. He knew at a glance that they were peering down the gully.

"It's Jesse James himself!" he cried, as he recognized one of the figures. "We must hide! Quick!"

Catching the girl in his arms, he darted back behind a boulder just as they heard a yell a little way up the gully, from the direction where they had seen the outlaws.

"Look out, thar, Jess. I give ye fair warnin'," said a strange voice, which the detective could faintly hear in the distance.

The exclamation came from behind one of the basalt boulders toward which Jesse James was urging his horse, and was accompanied by a chorus of guffaws and an ominous clicking of revolvers.

"Trapped, by ——!" exclaimed the famous bandit; then he wheeled his horse like lightning and made a leap toward the shadows.

"So it's you, Dan Elkins! Curse you! I might have guessed it!" he roared. "That Injun tricked me, the whelp!"

Jesse James dug his spurs into his horse, and with incredible cleverness put a ridge of rocks between himself and his enemy.

The detectives, realizing that their presence was not known, were puzzled to know how Dan Elkins, Jesse James' famous rival, could have been hidden so near them.

Before they had time to think, Jesse James shouted:

"Come on, Dan Elkins, and all of your gang! I have plenty of men behind me, the best shots in the country! Jesse James is afraid of no man that ever pulled a trigger!"



## CHAPTER III.

## THE ABDUCTION.

At his very first words there was a movement among the rocks, and the two detectives slunk back farther into the shadow, keeping the girl between them.

"He's right! It's the Elkins gang! I thought they were in Mexico!" whispered Star, softly. "There's going to be the devil to pay in just about one holy minute!"

"It lets us out, anyway," chuckled Gray, as the dark forms kept leaping over the bowlders until fully a dozen were assembled in the gorge not twenty feet from the rock behind which Jesse James was hiding. They were all unmounted, which accounted for their having been able to creep up so near without the detectives hearing them.

"Lucky our horses are so well hidden," muttered Star, under his breath, and then they all three relapsed into silence while they witnessed the doings of the two outlaw gangs in the uncertain light that glinted through the gully. The Elkins gang, led on by their desperado chief, crept slowly toward the rock, fingering their weapons lovingly as they whispered instructions to each other.

Then, with a deafening yell, they rushed headlong around the ridge of rock, to be met by a volley of bullets and a roar like thunder.

"Ha! ha! Come on! There's five of you down!" shouted Jesse James, after the first volley.

The crack of firearms was the only answer to his questions. Then Elkins could be heard giving back his taunts with interest.

"We're even, Jess! Blaze away, boys! Pepper the hull crew! We'll wipe that thar James gang out of existence ter-night an' own Arizona! We'll——"

Crack!

Bang!

Thud!

A bullet plowed its way across the gorge and landed against the rock ten inches above Bob Gray's head, and the rest of the sentence was lost in the volley that followed.

"It's all over, I guess!" whispered Star, a minute later. "I can't hear anything but groans and curses and horses' hoofs against the bowlders."

They listened a minute longer, and then Star ventured out, stepping over the first victim in the Elkins gang before he had traversed ten feet from the bowlder.

Gray followed him with the girl at his side, and they were soon able to account for the instantaneous silence.

A sharp turn in the gorge about fifty feet away shut off the sound of both footsteps and yells, and every living member of both gangs had turned this point and were engaged in a mad race that meant much to the detectives.

Eight men in all were left in the ravine, six dead and two dying from hideous wounds, but neither of the detectives paused to offer them consolation.

Their business at present was to get out of the fearful place, and in five minutes Star was leading out their three weary horses.

Picking their way carefully, they passed on down the gorge until they reached the spot where they could climb back again to the level desert and get their bearings, after which they jogged slowly back to their camping-place, and once more dismounted. It was nearly daylight now, and the air had become chilly, but the change from the day's heat was very refreshing.

At daybreak they were back upon their horses, making for Tucson, and keeping a sharp lookout for any traces of either gang of outlaws.

Gray had discovered that his fair companion was a Miss Miller, from Tombstone, and the two made rapid strides toward friendship on that weary dog trot across the desert.

On the outskirts of Tucson the little party halted and a story was concocted which Miss Miller promised to carry out.

It was to the effect that they were all three passengers in the ill-fated coach, and it was hoped that such a statement would disarm suspicion and allow the detectives to do their work without any one guessing their errand.



Reining up at a log hut which had an enormous barn behind it, they dropped from their jaded horses and requested admission.

A man opened the door that made Star stare in astonishment for a minute, for he recognized the fellow.

He was of medium stature, with an immense head and enormous shoulders and the most curiously curved legs.

"Out of the frying pan into the fire," thought Star, but he did not display a tremor, although he knew the fellow to be Bill Howard, another desperado of the Dan Elkins order.

The horses had fallen from utter weariness and Miss Miller was seriously ill, so there was no going on, and a moment later they were all ushered into the kitchen of the log cabin.

The group of men seated around a table looked up as they came in, and at that point a thrill of horror shot through the detectives, for the trio consisted of Jesse James, Frank James and Dan Elkins.

There was no time to wonder at this strange combination, for Jesse James sprang to his feet at once and ripped out a volley of curses.

"The gal I saw in the stagecoach, or I'm a liar!" he roared, hoarsely. "Now, who the devil are the others! Bolt the door, there, Bill, while I look them over!"

The detectives shuddered, for they both had papers of importance concealed on their persons, but Gray found his wits in time to postpone the looking over.

"For God's sake, men, have a little humanity! Give the girl some water and something in the shape of nourishment!" he cried, angrily. "Can't you see that she's nearly dead with the ride across the desert?"

"Where'd you come from, anyhow? Taint true, now, she was in the stage from Tombstone, is it? Why, Jess says the old lumber cart toppled over the Alkali Cliff! There's water fer yer, stranger, an' whiskey if yer want it!" Howard bolted the door as he spoke and then set whiskey and water before his guests, together with some grease for them to smear on their sore faces.

Star had been waiting his time to speak, and now, as

Gray assisted Miss Miller to a chair, and held a cup of water to her lips, he strode up to the table and raised Jesse James' own glass of whiskey.

"I reckon this hyar's purty free frum pisen, seein' as how Jess is drinkin' it," he said, coolly. "This hyar's a tough congregation, accordin' ter my way of thinkin'. How be yer, Bill Howard, an' when did yer leave Tombstone?"

There was a second's silence, in which Star emptied the tumbler and set it back on the table, and then Dan Elkins burst into a fit of laughter.

"Cussed if it ain't Arizona Ike," he said, with a chuckle and extending his hand. "Put it thar, old feller! How d'y, you old buzzard!"

His back was to the others, and as he extended his hand toward Star, he gave him a significant wink which, under the circumstances, the detective was pleased to see meant friendship.

He laid his hand in the broad palm and let out the usual profane greeting, after which he could see that his identity had been firmly established.

"Now what the devil does the rascal mean?" he thought, as he laughed and joked with Elkins. "There's something behind this game, but it's beyond me to fathom it. The fellow may be making a play to fool Jess for some reason or other."

Miss Miller had revived a little, and Gray set the glass down on the table, then he turned to Star and asked for a bit of information.

"As you've been so kind as to pilot us here perhaps you'll be good enough to tell me how to get this young lady into Tucson."

"Who are you? What's your name, and where did you come from?" asked Jesse James, all in one breath.

"You ought to know, Bill Howard," spoke up Gray, promptly. "You've been the biggest man in Tombstone long enough to locate Bob White."

Bill Howard was in league with Dan Elkins, and seeing his pard prepared to recognize Star, Howard took the cue and held out his hand to Gray.



"I've heard of ye. Did you come from Tombstone?"

"Yes, and I'm bound for Tucson! If you can furnish me with any kind of a vehicle that will carry this lady safely, I'll——"

"I'll carry the lady into Tucson myself!" broke in Jesse James.

"No! No! Not for the world, Jesse James!" cried Miss Miller, faintly. "You are a robber! A murderer!"

"That won't hinder me from taking good care of you, miss," said the outlaw, grimly.

"Bring out the mule team, Bill, and be quick about it!" roared the outlaw.

Gray bit his lip and flushed with mortification, while Star had all he could do to remember his rôle and laugh with the others.

Miss Miller braced herself nervily for the ordeal.

Gray had it on his tongue's end to demur, but the click of the outlaw's pistol made him close his lips, and five minutes later the young girl and Jesse James rode away together.

"Whar'll he take ther gal do yer reckon?" asked Star, trying to speak indifferently.

Bill Howard closed the door again and locked it before he answered, showing plainly by the act that he had no idea of losing his guests at present.

"Jess has got er house somewhars nigh Tucson, I reckon," said Elkins.

"Thar's some cusses above ground thet hev ter sail under no end of names," he went on, calmly. "I reckon now thet Jess is one of them kind. 'Pears ter me I've heerd ther people of Tucson er talkin' erbout 'Mr. Benson,' an' I've got ther idee somewhars that 'Mr. Benson' is Jess. He wears er gray moustache an' er pair of mut-tonchop whiskers, an' thar's an account in the Tucson Bank for Mr. William Ebenezer Benson."

He leered at Frank James tauntingly as he spoke, and the outlaw rose with an oath, and moved from the table.

"You know too much for your own good, Dan," he said, angrily. "I told Jess this morning he was a fool to

trust you! You're a snake in the grass if ever I saw one!"

Jesse James was back before long.

As Bill Howard moved to open the door, Elkins leaned over towards Star and muttered:

"Keep Jess er thinkin' we're all his friends, you two, and we'll let you in on a deal that'll make you rich afore mornin'!"

The detectives nodded, and Star reached for the whisky bottle again, and was pouring his friend a drink, as Jesse James entered.

It now commenced to appear to the detectives that Elkins' only purpose in making believe to recognize them, was to secure their help in some treacherous plot he was hatching.

He had surrendered to Jesse James the night before, and had joined his gang, but there was no telling when his treacherous nature would lead him to betray the king of outlaws.

"Now that I've squared my conscience, I'm ready for biz," laughed Jesse, as he entered the cabin. "She's the pluckiest gal I ever saw! I reckon now she's in love with you, stranger, but that's nothing against her."

He gave Gray a keen glance as he spoke, and, drawing a chair where he could face him, sat down heavily with his elbows on the table.

"I'm glad if I won the young lady's good will," said Gray, stiffly. "We were fellow-passengers from Tucson, and for that reason, Jesse James, you'd be doing the square thing if you'd tell me where you took her!"

"Ha! Ha! You might be right, stranger! I reckon now there's another side to that question, though! How do I know the girl won't squeal on me in Tucson? She knows I'm Jesse James and that I robbed the stage. You didn't suppose I was going to let her loose among the people in this section, did you?"

Jesse James drew a heavy watch from his pocket and looked at it. When he spoke again, he changed the subject.

"The mule team is hitched up and standing in front of



the colonel's door," he said, slowly. "Now, then, men, once more, is this a square deal or not? Remember, it means a carcass full of bullets for some one, if it isn't."

He looked around as he spoke, and found every eye upon his face, and not a suspicion of treachery upon any feature.

"We're dealin' fair, Jess! It's a big haul, and ther team's sure to be well guarded," answered Howard. "Thar ain't no two men thet kin corral thet thar gold alone, but ther six of us orter do it easy."

"What the devil do you mean? These two strangers don't count!" roared the outlaw, furiously.

Star slammed his glass down on the table, and made a grab for the butt of his revolver.

"Hold on, Jess! Don't be too sure o' thet thar!" he said, gruffly.

"Ike's in ther deal, Jess, an' I'll 'low he ain't fergot ther biz," broke in Elkins. "Yer kin gamble on him, Jess! I ain't so sure of thet tother feller!"

"Then I'll put my mark on him! He's all right!" broke in Star. "He's as green as grass, but he'll do what you tell him."

Jesse James seemed satisfied after all the talk, and for another hour the five sat together planning the night's work, and at eleven o'clock Frank James and another rough looking specimen joined them.

"There's thirty men in the guard, all armed to the teeth," began Frank. "The team starts in half an hour, and will reach the Pass at midnight. It's time we were in the saddle if we mean to be ahead of them."

"Bring the horses, Sam!" ordered Howard, and the last man made his way to the barn and led out some fresh horses.

Five minutes later they were all in the saddle, each carrying two revolvers and a generous supply of ammunition. Their intention was to waylay the mule team carrying the gold, kill the guard and drive to a lonely spot in the mountains, where a gang of men would meet them, and bury the treasure until such a time as they could conveniently transfer it to a place of greater safety.

"There's a cool half million apiece," said Elkins to Jesse James, as they rode along, neither falling an inch behind the other.

A minute later Elkins' horse stumbled and was a head's length behind Jesse James' thoroughbred, and with a flash of the eye, Frank James touched his mount with the spurs and dropped his hand upon his pistol.

This gave the two detectives the chance for a word, and as the others were all looking at the byplay, Star whispered, softly:

"It is to-night or never, old man! Jess hasn't a friend except his brother in the crowd, and he'll never leave this gang alive, I'm thinking."

"That's the mule team! Hold on, boys!" he called. "Let 'em round the knoll and git out inter the road a piece. We kin scoot across the lots without their seein' us and reach the Pass in time ter plan er little."

They stood perfectly still where they were until the heavy team passed in the distance.

"Get a move on, men! Those horses go fast when they first start!" roared Frank James, and the next minute the entire party was scudding over the rough country in an effort to circumvent the mule team in the most desirable locality.

## CHAPTER IV.

### HOLDING UP THE MULE TEAM.

Star urged his horse as close to Gray's as possible, and there was a chance to exchange a word now and then as they galloped on.

"They're planning to 'do' Jess as soon as he helps them corral the gold," was Star's first statement.

"They're a precious pair, but see how Frank watches them," was the answer. "He hasn't taken his eyes off of Elkins since we started."

"Jess anticipates trouble, but he conceals it well," laughed Star. "I'm beginning to wonder where we come in on this deal, anyhow!"

"That's easy! We're bandits! I hope we ain't counted out on the divy!"



A laugh followed that made Bill Howard turn his head, and after that he managed to wedge his horse in between them, so as to prevent any more conversation.

After ten minutes of hard riding they came out upon the high road and it took but a minute of listening to prove that the mule team was behind them.

The night was dark, there being only a few stars visible, and just before the team came in sight the men clapped masks over their faces.

Star searched his pockets and found one of the useful articles and a minute later Dan Elkins handed Gray one made of black cloth, with two holes in it.

"Git out here, Dan Elkins, and help me hold up the team!" whispered Jesse James. Frank and Bill can hide behind the bowlder! That'll make the chances even!"

"Great snakes, Jess! Yer ain't lookin' fer treachery in this hyar deal, air ye?" asked Elkins.

"I ain't lookin' for anything uncommon if I am," was the gruff answer. "What's your answer, Dan? Will you come out into the road with me? If you don't, I can promise you there won't be any hold up of yonder team on this occasion!"

"Ther game's up! Jess suspects us!" muttered Elkins to Howard, but Star was near enough to catch the whisper.

A shout from the mule team as it rounded the curve made the entire group fall back into the shadows, then Jesse James drew his revolvers and gave a final order.

"Once more Dan Elkins! Will you come out into the road or not? I may be wrong in suspectin' you, but that don't count! What I want is a fair and square answer to my question!"

"I'm comin', Jesse!" was the reply, after Elkins and Howard had a word together.

He moved out into the road as he spoke, and Jesse James met him, leaving Star and Bill Howard on one side and Gray and Sam Searles on the other, the four being hidden from sight by a fringe of rocks and bushes.

The next second there was a shout from the driver of the mule team, which showed that he had seen them, and

the crack of a revolver echoed among the distant foothills.

"Hold on, there! Keep your bullets to yourself or it'll be the worse for you!" roared Jesse James, taking a position close to Elkins in the middle of the road.

"Git out er ther way, or I'll plug you full of bullets!" was the driver's prompt answer. "This hyar team's under guard! Git out er ther way, or I'll send you ter blazes!"

"And my men will send you there at the same time!" retorted Jesse, coolly. "There's thirty-two of you fellers, while my men number fifty! Halt! A rod farther and we'll fire a volley that'll riddle mules and all! We're after that gold, and I warn you we mean business!"

"So do we, curse you!" was the answer, and the revolver cracked again, putting a bullet within an inch of the outlaw's hat brim.

Fleetwind, the horse that Jesse James was riding, moved just in time to save her master, and the next minute the six outlaws each emptied two revolvers apiece as rapidly as possible, the detectives firing into the air so as to do no damage.

It was a great temptation for the two of them to shoot down the two bandits in the middle of the road, but the knowledge that they were being closely watched by their companions prevented them from doing so.

Several of the men guarding the mule team uttered cries of pain, and three of them fell dead before they could discharge their weapons.

At that minute both Jesse James and Sam Elkins moved back into the shadows of the rocks, so when the guard returned the volley it was forced to guess at the direction of the enemy.

The outlaws reloaded and fired again, killing the two leaders on the team and wounding three more of the guard.

Another volley followed, and this time Sam Searles gave a yell that told that a bullet had reached him, and Gray found it expedient to move back a little.

"There they are, curse them!" roared the driver, and



a hail of bullets fell around Searles' dead body, one of them reaching his frightened horse and killing it instantly.

Gray worked his way through the bushes and got behind a boulder just as another cracking of weapons showed that his companions were still at it.

Then it flashed into his mind that neither Jesse James nor the other two desperadoes knew whether he had been hit or not, and it was the opportunity of his life to do a little clever acting.

The guardsmen located the second fire and were blazing away as he slid from his horse and, fastening it securely, crept back through the bushes.

He was not forty yards from the mule team, but he succeeded in stripping Searles of his hat, coat and trowsers, and exchanging them for his own, he made his way back and remounted.

Then, as Jesse James and Dan Elkins suddenly reappeared in the road followed closely by Star and Howard, he made a detour of a boulder and came up behind them.

"I reckon that's all over!" bawled Elkins, as the last of the guard went down, leaving the enormous load of treasure unprotected.

"Come on, men, and clear away those two dead mules! Drag them into the bushes, and the other carcasses after them!"

"Some one was winged! Who was it?" asked Howard, glancing back over his shoulder.

Gray altered his voice so as to speak like Searles and answered promptly:

"Ther young feller's cashed in, Bill! He was doin' good work, too! I've got his hoss! Mine's got a bullet in her shoulder!"

Jesse James and Elkins were already at work, and as Howard joined them Gray pressed forward and touched Star's foot in passing.

Star leaned over in his saddle, and Gray raised his hat brim a little, and as they exchanged a quick look Star chuckled softly.

"We ain't a bad pair to draw to, if we are tenderfeet!" he whispered.

"Here, Searles! Lend a hand!" yelled Elkins, at that minute. "These mules are the stubbornest I ever seen. Git up thar! Thet's somethin' like! Now then, lead ther way Jess, while Bill an' I drive ther critters!"

"A roar of laughter from the outlaw followed this order, and Fleetwind was reined to a position exactly on a level with the speaker.

"I reckon I ain't a bad mule-driver myself, now!" he said, sarcastically. "Searles can go ahead, he knows the way, and Frank and Bill can bring up the rear, just to keep the thing even!"

"Yer a foxey cuss, Jess! I 'low now y' think we'd do yer, so's thar wouldn't be any divvy!" growled Elkins, as he prodded the mules.

"I ain't takin' any chances!" was the outlaw's cool answer. "There's too much gold there for me to think of quittin' the game just now! If I was counted out, you'd have a bonanza, Elkins!"

"It's the biggest deal I was ever in," admitted the robber. "An' I 'low you done ther most of ther work, Jess! Yer kin count Arizona Ike on yer side, an' thet thar'll make ther divvy even!"

"I ain't countin' any one that I don't know by sight!" answered the outlaw, sharply. "The feller may be Ike, and he may not. I don't know, and as for the divvy, we'll settle that later. The thing now is to get to the meeting place as quick as possible!"

Howard and Elkins exchanged glances at this, with Frank James' eyes upon their faces, and once more Star and Gray got a word together.

"The worst is to come, I reckon! Who is waiting for the swag, anyhow? If they are Elkins' men, Jess' game is up, while if they're the balance of the James' gang, I can see Dan's finish."

Gray was entirely unfamiliar with the country over which they were passing, so he bent low in the saddle, as if he was asleep, hoping that this would serve as an excuse in case his mustang took the wrong direction.



"The original destination of the load of treasure was fifty miles distant, but ten miles from the spot where they had captured the team the outlaws suddenly veered to the left and made straight for the mountains. They had stopped to rest twice, so it was broad daylight when they arrived, but at ten in the morning they had left the sun behind them and were picking their way through a narrow gorge overhung by bowlders.

Arriving at a spot which was fairly hemmed in by the hills, Jesse James halted the team, and the men dismounted.

Dan Elkins took a whistle from his pocket and blew three blasts, and in less than a minute it was answered by some one.

Then, much to the detectives' surprise, Jesse James did the same, then the entire party sat down on the rocks and waited.

"This is growing exciting," thought Star, as he looked around at the sullen features. "It's evidently a case of 'horse and horse,' and the victory will depend on which has the greatest number of cutthroats with him."

Jesse James and Elkins were sharing the same stone, and both showed signs of the strain that they were enduring, while Howard had seated himself by the side of Frank James.

The bogus Searles had not been detected yet, for Gray played his part well, and besides he had managed about daylight to get a release from his duty and fall back to the rear, while Howard acted as pilot.

It was a relief when the tramp of feet was heard, and a party of twelve rough-looking fellows joined them from a northerly direction.

Elkins gave Jesse James a quick look and his eyes emitted a gleam of triumph as he saw them, but he only made a careless gesture as he introduced them.

"Thet thar's ther balance of my gang at present, Jess. They'll hide the stuff all right, I reckon."

Another tramp of feet sounded and another gang made their appearance from the south, and the detectives stared

in surprise as they discovered that the newcomers numbered exactly a dozen.

"They are all the gang I've got with me in Arizona," said Jesse James, coolly. "Between the lot I reckon the stuff will be handled satisfactory. The thing now, Dan, is to decide where to hide it!"

The look on Dan Elkins' face could not be mistaken. It was plain that he had not expected his rival to bring out such a crew, and his chagrin at the sight was stamped plainly on his features.

"I 'low there's more'n are needed ter do the job, Jess!" spoke up Bill Howard, uneasily. "The gold ain't so tarnal heavy but what we could manage it!"

"The numbers are even! What more do you want?" asked the clever outlaw, sharply. "If you fellows think you can outdo me, now's your chance to try. The numbers are even, and you'll never see a bigger swag at one time than the one we have yonder!"

He faced Elkins as he spoke, and like a flash both drew their pistols, while, without an order of any kind, the two gangs drew their revolvers.

Then there sounded a volley at short range, which echoed through the foothills.

The moment the firing began, Star and Gray managed to move out of range, behind a bowlder. They had no intention of taking sides in the outlaws' fight.

So intent were the outlaws upon the battle, that their action was apparently not noticed, and, if it was, it was supposed that they intended to pick off the enemy from behind the improvised breastworks.

For although before Jesse James, they had claimed the acquaintance of Dan Elkins, they had all along given Jesse James to know, without Elkins noticing it, that they were with him, if there was any treachery on foot.

"By thunder! Jess must be protected by armor!" muttered Star, as he saw three bullets strike the outlaw's body and glance off harmlessly.

A howl from Elkins at that minute showed that he had thought the same thing, and as his men poured out another volley at the others of the rival gang, he raised



his weapon and aimed straight at the bandit king's forehead. In an instant his rifle was knocked out of his hands, and Frank James felled him to the ground with a blow from the butt of an empty revolver.

Then, as every weapon had become useless, the uninjured members of the two gangs grappled with each other, and Jesse James drew back a little, where he could overlook the struggle.

At first, honors were about even, but as their leader lay upon the ground, unable to spur them on, the Elkins gang gradually lost nerve, and were soon overcome by their opponents.

When the last one went down, Jesse James gave a howl of satisfaction, and the detectives knew it was time to attend to business.

As Gray was still supposed to be Searles, he set about examining the wounds of the Elkins gang, while Star turned at once to the victorious outlaw for orders.

"We'll get out of here at once! Prod up those mules and start 'em ahead!" said Jess, promptly.

Star made his way back over a score of groaning and cursing outlaws, who were either lying or sitting on the ground nursing their injuries, to the mule team, which had been left entirely unprotected.

When he came back, Gray was nowhere to be seen.

Two members of the James gang joined him, and between them they got the mules to their feet, while Jesse James forced a way for them among the dead and injured.

Elkins had not revived, so he was dragged out of the path, and Jesse James himself gave him a drink of whisky.

Then he led his horse out from between the rocks and mounted it calmly. As the mule team was moving slowly along, he quickened his pace and was soon ahead of them.

Star saw him gallop past, and his hand fell to his revolver. Then he gave a quick look at his two companions. One of them, a fellow with a red beard and blood-

shot eyes, was prodding the mules, but the other, whose face looked very familiar, was staring at him curiously.

"Bink Barrows, by thunder!" thought Star. "I wonder if the rascal knows me!"

"Reckon now yer'd like ter take er shot at Jess, wouldn't yer, pardner?" muttered Bink at that minute. "Waal, I ain't a blamin' yer! I'd like ter see yer!"

"What ther devil do yer mean? I was jest feelin' ter see if I'd lost ther pop," answered Star, who was on his guard, and had no idea of committing himself to a fellow like Barrows.

"Thet thar's all right, pardner!" chuckled the fellow. "Reckon I know them thar togs ef they do be wrong side out! You're ther sleuthhound, pardner! Yer needn't deny it!"

"You're a liar, and I'll make you eat your words!" roared Star, turning quickly and drawing a bead on the fellow.

"Hold on, Jess! Thar's a scrap on!" yelled the red-whiskered man, promptly.

"Let 'em fight it out! I ain't actin' peacemaker!" called back the bandit over his shoulder.

The red-whiskered fellow chuckled, and just then the off hind mule balked and kept him so busy that he could not listen to the altercation that was going on on the other side of the treasure.

"You keep your mouth shut, or I'll pump holes in you, Bink Barrows!" said Star, in a low voice. "I think you said you hated Jess, and if that's ther case, what ails you? Don't forget that I saved your life, you sneakin' traitor!"

"I reckon now I won't forgit nuthin, an ef yer want er right-hand man ter help yer down Jess, all yer've got ter do is ter mention yer figger! I'm an admirer of nerve, and hang me ef yer ain't nervy!"

"I'll give you five thousand in dust if you'll stand by me now," said Star.

"Thet thar's a go! I'll do it, pardner," was the prompt answer.

After another mile Jesse James halted before the door



of a natural cave among the bowlders. At an order from him the men began tugging at the gold, and before it was all hidden in the cave three more of the James gang joined them.

Star looked them over carefully, in the hope that one of them might be his chum in disguise, but he did not find him.

"Hurry up, men," ordered Jesse, "and get the stuff in the cave! It's only a makeshift, but the mules can't go much farther! We'll get a fresh team somewhere and come back this evening!"

He rolled a big stone from before the door of the cave as he spoke, and, after the gold was carried in, he directed the men to conceal the traces of their efforts by sprinkling fresh earth over their footprints.

"Whar be ye goin' ter take ther stuff, Jess?" asked Bink, after a wink from the detective.

"You mind your business and shut up your questions!" was the answer. "Time enough for you to know where it's going when I tell you, Bink Barrows!"

Giving a sharp glance behind, he ordered the mule teams driven on a few paces; then once more the injured men were set to work removing all traces of their labor.

When they finally moved away from that vicinity no one would have guessed that they had halted there, and it was fully an hour before the little cavalcade was again halted.

They had arrived at one of the loneliest spots in the Sierra's now, and the mules were so exhausted that they could hardly hold their heads up.

Going from one to the other, Jesse James put a bullet into their brains. Then the horsemen rode on, leaving the faithful creatures piled up in the path, but freed from their sufferings.

Star kept listening for the sound of hoofbeats behind them, but they halted for rest without his hearing any, and he was forced to believe that he and his chum were separated effectually, a thing which complicated his dangers a thousandfold and caused him a great deal of uneasiness.

Jesse James had led them to a spring of delicious water, and, as the verdure about the spring was delightful, they settled themselves for a few hours of slumber.

Jesse James was plunged in such deep thought that he hardly noticed his men, except his brother, with whom he had a long, low conversation.

Star did not dare to go to sleep, for fear Bink would betray him, but he sank down in the shade near the robber.

The red-whiskered fellow scouted around and brought in a few birds, which were spitted over a rude fire and made excellent eating.

At sundown two of the men were sent to the nearest settlement for a mule team, and at exactly midnight they were back at the cave, which they found in exactly the same condition as they had left it.

Jesse James himself rode forward and reconnoitered; then the rest of his party advanced until they filled the entire space before the cave, and the bags of gold were dragged out and reloaded.

Star did his share of the lifting and loading, but his heart was beginning to be heavy in his breast, and he was tired with the constant strain of watching Bink Barrows.

No way of getting the best of Jesse James had presented itself yet, and as it would have been worse than foolish to attempt such a thing alone, he was forced to continue playing the rôle of bandit.

What was his surprise and delight, then, as he was helping to lift the last bag, to hear not a hundred yards behind him a well-known signal!

It was a mocking bird's cry with one false note! He and Gray had practiced it until they got it to perfection.

Jesse James picked up his ears as he heard it, and a dark frown gathered upon his face, while his glance traveled from one man to the other like a flash of lightning.

"That's a queer bird that don't know it's own song!" observed the outlaw, grimly.

Star held his breath, but a smile stole over his fea-



tures, and then the mocking bird's cry came again, this time as true as possible.

"You're fooled this time, Jesse James!" he thought, as he watched the expression of surprise on the outlaw's face. "That was clever in Gray to do it right the second time!"

But Star had done a lot of thinking, and was growing desperate, for he knew that his friend's signal should be answered some way.

Suddenly Jesse raised his head a little and imitated the mocking bird's call, giving it so clear and true that no bird could help answering it.

In an instant it was repeated with the false note that he had mentioned, and Star nearly jumped for joy, for the outlaw himself had helped him out of his dilemma.

"That was well done, Jess! Yer're got an ear to be proud of!" cried Star. "I reckon now you and I are ther only two in ther bunch that could imitate that there discord! Hold yer breath now, fer I'm goin' ter show yer er half tone in yer whistle that's as far askew as ther bird's own whistle!"

Before a word could be spoken he also repeated the call, which was not so different from the outlaw's as to occasion any egotism.

"Ther same thing! Jess did it as well as you did!" roared Bink Barrows, promptly.

"Cuss ther feller! Ike allus was er fool!" bawled one of the others.

Jesse James said nothing, but his eyes were fixed upon Star's face, and there was something in his glance that made the detective nervous.

"I reckon now I was right first off!" said the outlaw chief, after a minute. "I reckon one call didn't mean anything and two was a signal! If I'm right, you'll have reason to remember me, you mongrel! Move forward men! Get ahead there, Bink Barrows!"

He reined his horse close to Star as he spoke and the mule team started, one of the men walking on each side to prod the lagging creatures.

"So you are Arizona Ike, are you?" asked Jesse

James, sternly. "I ain't had much time to look you over, pardner, but I reckon now, as you've joined my gang, I have that privilege! Take off your hat! I want to look at you!"

He drew his pistol as he spoke, and aimed it squarely at Star's heart, but before the detective could comply a yell from Frank James interrupted:

"We're trapped, Jess! Break for the woods yonder and lose no time! That bird call was a signal! The marshal is after us!"

## CHAPTER V.

JESSE JAMES, ALIAS MR. WILLIAM BENSON.

Jesse James waited for nothing, but obeyed his brother's order, but as he dashed ahead he heard the tread of a small army behind him. Star raised his revolver impulsively and sent a bullet flying after the outlaw. The next second a ball from Frank James' weapon passed clean through the detective's body.

When he regained consciousness, Gray was bending over him and the sound of shots could be heard in the distance.

"Hello, old pard! Thank God, you're alive!" began Gray, with the tears almost in his eyes.

"Am I much hurt?" asked Star, who felt rather stiff on one side.

"I don't think so! The doctor, here, says there's no serious damage. The ball cut through the muscles, but there's no internal hemorrhage."

"Where's Jess? Did they get him?" was Star's next question.

Gray and the surgeon from the marshal's staff assisted him to his feet before they answered.

"Jess got away and so did Frank! There's three of the rascals dead, though, and Bink Barrows is one of them."

"Then I'll breathe easier," laughed Star, reviving considerably at the news. "Bink recognized the coat, and expected him to squeal any minute."



After a while Star was helped to mount one of the horses.

Gray had headed his horse toward Tucson, but they had gone some distance before Star noticed it. When he did he was a little surprised that the chase for Jess had been abandoned.

"The marshal is after him now with forty men, so we're out of the game for a while, old fellow! They're got the gold, now if they could only get Jess!" was Gray's explanation.

"How about Dan Elkins?" asked Star.

"Corraled and taken to Tucson in company with Howard, and all the rest of them! I had the devil's own time to prove my identity," was the answer. "Thank fortune, my papers were safe, and the marshal believed me!"

"What's the lay now, old man? If Jess is still loose, we've got to keep after him."

Gray laughed and leaned over to steady his chum in his saddle.

"We'll go back to Tucson and put you to bed for a day or two, old man!"

"Then I've got a little deal to settle with Mr. William Benson!"

Star understood what he meant and nodded his head in sympathy, for he could appreciate his chum's anxiety over the fate of Miss Miller.

He endured the long ride like a hero, and arrived in Tucson at last not much the worse for the journey.

They had planned to reach the city at night, and running across a lonely hut on the outskirts, they were able to provide themselves with something different in the line of clothes by purchasing them of the occupants.

Selecting a small hotel they engaged a room, and early the next morning Gray went out and made some other purchases.

When the city was fully awake the two detectives were neatly garbed, and would have passed in any crowd as tourists or drummers of the tenderfoot variety.

The medical member of the marshal's posse took his de-

parture by the first eastbound train, but not before he had gathered all the information on tap in the city.

"The natives are frightened stiff," he explained, after a visit to the principal barroom.

"They've heard that Jesse James has made off with that gold, and they're expecting every minute to see him make off with Arizona!"

Star stayed in bed for two days, and then felt so well that he ventured out and, in the meantime, Gray secured some valuable information regarding the Benson family. Benson was said to be a man of curious habits. He owned a substantial frame house on the outskirts of the town, and was noted principally for his kennel of fierce bloodhounds.

These hounds were not kept in any particular spot, but allowed to roam all over the spacious grounds which surrounded the Benson dwelling.

A high board fence inclosed the yard in front of the building, while the lot in the rear was fringed with a row of outbuildings besides a well-built corral for the Benson horses.

Trades people left their orders at a wicket in the high board fence, with a pack of hounds snapping and snarling on the other side of the two-inch planks in a way that made them satisfied not to venture any nearer.

The Benson family, as far as any one knew, consisted of an elderly woman who came there from time to time, four brutal-looking stable men and one handsome young woman who was known in Tucson as Mrs. Benson.

Mr. Benson himself rarely visited the place, and when he did he came and went at night, and but few people saw him.

The Elkins gang had been terrorizing that section for some time, and more than once the natives of Tucson had turned their eyes toward that house, but it had not occurred to them before that they were harboring Jesse James, the world's greatest bandit.

The holding-up of the mule team, and a report that Jesse James was in the deal, had set them to thinking, and



when Gray began to ask questions it did not take them long to jump at conclusions.

Elkins had been promptly jailed to await some sort of a trial, and posse after posse was sent out in search of the rest of the robbers. When they returned, bringing only the dead bodies of the outlaws of both gangs, the excitement arose to a tremendous pitch.

The two detectives told no tales as they asked their questions, and one night, as they sat in one of the bar-rooms of the town, two of the Benson stablemen sauntered in and engaged one of the *habitués* of the place in indifferent conversation.

They were muscular-looking fellows, armed to the teeth with knives and pistols, and as they leaned their elbows on the bar the detectives noticed that the bartender and the two exchanged glances, and then one of the waiters passed Star and touched him lightly upon the shoulder.

The detective took the hint and promptly ordered refreshments for himself and Gray, and as the man set it before them he made a cautious statement:

"They're lookin' fer news! Wait a minute, an' you'll see! They never come in here without askin' a lot of questions."

A minute later the men turned from the bar and sauntered across the room to the table where the detectives were sitting.

"Hello, stranger!" said one of them, with a sharp glance at Gray. "You're ther chap from Tombstone, ain't yer?"

"How the devil did you guess it?" said Gray, good-naturedly. "Yes, I'm the chap that went over the cliff in the Tombstone stage, if that is what you want to know! How is Miss Miller getting on? I hope she's all right by this time!"

He looked the man squarely in the face as he spoke, and, as the fellow had been drinking heavily, he seemed dazed for a minute.

"Mr. Benson took her in charge just in the nick of time," went on Gray, calmly. "The horses had given out, and the young lady was pretty near done up. I reckon now I'll drop in and pay my respects to the young lady to-morrow! No objections to my calling at the Benson home, is there?"

The remark was made so innocently that the two stablemen stared again, and then one of them leaned forward

and put his elbows on the table, bringing his brutal face on a level with the detective's.

"Whar did ye run afoul of Mr. Benson?" he asked. "To the best of our knowin', the man's a thousand miles from Arizona."

His hand fell to the butt of a revolver as he spoke, but he was so near intoxicated that he handled it clumsily. Star whipped out his own weapon, and snapped the trigger under the fellow's nose, then he and Gray both rose from the table.

"You're too inquisitive, my friend! If you are looking for trouble, I reckon I can accommodate you, but—Hello! What's the matter?"

He broke off suddenly, for there was a clatter of feet outside and a chorus of yells.

Then the door flew open, and a man, apparently about fifty years of age, dashed in and promptly bolted the door behind him.

"It's Benson," muttered the drink-server, as he passed the detectives.

"Jesse James himself!" responded Star, in a low voice, as he tightened his grip on his weapon.

The two stablemen rose unsteadily, and in a second their master's eye fell upon them.

"Here, you two rascals! Guard the door, and if any one enters, shoot him like a dog! I'm going to leave this place by way of the cellar!" he roared, excitedly.

He dashed across the floor as he spoke, and made grab for a ring that was attached to a trapdoor, but before he could lift the door Star covered him with his weapon.

It was a great moment for the detective, for no man was ever known to have a bead on the famous outlaw before.

The next second there was a sharp report, and the pistol dropped from his hand, while with a speed that was incredible the outlaw disappeared into the cellar.

Star wheeled around, but found that Gray had already drawn a bead on the two stablemen, so he darted to the door and threw it open.

A howling mob of men burst in. The detective quickly explained the situation.

"Quick! Surround the house! He is in the cellar!" he roared. "Don't let him escape, men! He is Jesse James!"



In the excitement of the moment Gray turned his head and the two stablemen bolted.

A dozen hands were laid on the trapdoor, while a score of the excited natives dashed around the building. Gray was one of the latter, and as he reached the rear yard he was in time to see an old man limping toward the road behind the buildings.

"Halt! Hold on there!" he roared, as the others surrounded the cellar door, waiting for the outlaw to make his appearance.

The old fellow did not even turn his head, and as Gray raised his weapon he was surprised to find the bartender beside him.

"Hold on there, stranger! Thet thar's Snipe Wilson, the bottle-washer of this hyar ranch! He's as deaf as er post! No use yellin' at Snipe! Yer'd better save yer bullets for Jess, curse him!"

Gray lowered his weapon just as the old man hobbled out of sight, and at that second the cellar door was burst open from the inside and the mob of angry townsmen came out, yelling like Indians.

"He's got away, curse him! Jess stands in with ther red-headed bartender yonder! After him, boys! String up the traitor!"

The mob had turned its attention upon the bartender, and in a second he was bound hand and foot and dragged back into the barroom.

Then another batch of townspeople came up out of the cellar, bringing the dead body of the genuine Snipe Wilson with them, and a coat and hat that every one recognized as Benson's.

Gray let out a cry of rage when he saw how he had been fooled, but as there was reason to think that the bartender was getting his dues, he joined a mob of about fifty people and started after the murderer, who had made off in the direction of the Benson house on the outskirts of the city.

## CHAPTER VI.

### GRAY RESCUES MISS MILLER.

The crowd in the barroom made short work of the bartender, and by the time the detectives were halfway to the Benson place, they found their party nearly doubled in number.

"Ther scoundrel got his deserts, curse him!" called out

the leader of the second posse as they came up. "He owned up he knew thet Benson was Jess! Reckon he used ter be a member of the James gang, an' hedn't fer-got the oath of ther organization!"

"It'll be a lesson ter any other rascals on ther same order, I reckon," said another voice. "Bill, hyar, made er purty piece of work er tattooin' ther traitor's body! I reckon now thar won't no one harbor Jesse James in this hyar town for some time!"

As they approached the Benson residence, the entire posse halted, and a plan of action was mapped out that would have worked all right if it had been carried out to the letter.

The mounted men, about ten in number, were dispersed around the premises, in order to overhaul Jesse if he took to the saddle.

The other men were divided into two squads, one to attack the front and the other the rear of the building. There was a general inspection of weapons and ammunition, then the whole party moved forward, and to any one who did not know the cleverness of the famous outlaw, it would certainly have looked as if Jesse James' hours were numbered.

The detectives, Star and Gray, were in the squad that approached the front of the building, and both were having hard work to conceal their excitement, for it did look as though their errand in Arizona was pretty nearly accomplished.

Further, Gray's anxiety over the fate of Miss Miller was making him miserable, and he felt sure that this strain also would be over before many minutes. Arriving at the high board fence, they went directly to the wicket, which was a square cut out of one of the boards and fitted with hinges.

There was a fairly smooth piece of ground inside, but there was no sign of either a dog or a human being.

Several of the men had started to batter down the fence, and just as they ripped off the first board the growl of a bloodhound reached them.

"Ther critters are thar, all right! I 'low they're holdin' 'em back, hopin' we'll come inside," said one of the men.

"Cussed ef ther place ain't er reg'lar fort with cannons stickin' out all over it!" cried another native, who was staring through the fence.



"Thar's a gun at every winder, an' thar's er wicket in ther door!"

A roar from the fierce brutes somewhere behind the house followed and then came a volley of shots from one division of the posse.

The next minute the front door of the house opened, and Gray, who had his eye at the wicket, gave a cry of alarm.

"My God! They've put her out and the dogs are after her! Quick, men! We must scale the fence and go to the rescue!"

He started to scramble up the fence, and Star took his place at the wicket just in time to see the door close sharply, leaving Miss Miller on the front step of the building, and a pack of vicious bloodhounds bounding around the corner.

With a yell he was up after his chum, and as they dropped to the ground inside of the inclosure, a dozen brave men lowered themselves down beside them.

"Now, then! Steady! One! Two! Three! Fire!" ordered Star.

The crack of firearms followed and three of the brutes fell dead, while the rest of the pack ran howling in all directions.

Miss Miller had sunk to the ground from fright within ten feet of the door, and, as she caught sight of Gray, she held out her arms to him for protection.

In an instant the brave fellow dashed across the yard, and the bloodhounds, seeing him, made a break in his direction.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

The weapons of the brave fellows inside of the fence spoke promptly and three more of the dogs fell dead, while a couple rolled over on the ground and then limped away howling.

At that second the wicket in the door flew open and Gray looked up to see Jesse James peering out with an evil smile upon his features. The wicket was directly behind Miss Miller and in range of the gate, but the dogs were coming again, so he did not stop an instant.

He had the girl in his arms and was trying to lift her to one side, when Jesse James thrust his revolver through the hole and dropped the hammer.

Gray felt a stinging pain, but he gritted his teeth, and,

using all his strength, he dragged the girl out of range of the wicket.

The next second he dropped to the ground, with the blood gushing from a wound in his shoulder, and another volley from his friends was the last thing he remembered.

"Quick! All together!" yelled Star, as he made a run toward the dogs. A dozen more men dropped over the fence, and there was a desperate rush toward the pack of ferocious beasts.

Dropping to one knee, the men poured out another volley, and this time the yard was strewn with the dead bodies of the bloodhounds.

The outlaw had closed the wicket, and as Star ran to his friend's assistance, he saw that the other divisions of the posse were coming to their assistance, both footmen and horsemen.

"Don't leave the rear unguarded!" he roared, as he bent over Gray. "That's exactly what Jess wants! Get around there, some of you!"

The men looked at each other, and several of them started to obey, but as they turned the angle of the house they were greeted with a fusillade of bullets.

Every window in the building was raining fire, and for a second there was nothing to be done but dodge to places of safety.

"Keep it up, men! Pepper the rascals!" roared Jesse James' voice from somewhere, and once more the ruinous log structure seemed to be turned into an arsenal.

A squad of men attempted to round the other angle of the house and were met with the same reception, and this showed them plainly that Star was right and that the whole thing had been a ruse to get them together. The clatter of horses' hoofs in the rear brought a growl of rage, and then the sheriff put himself at the head of the men, while a fellow by the name of Sykes took charge of the other.

"It's Jess! He's running away! After him, men, and hang the bullets!" roared the sheriff.

There was a dash around the two corners of the house at once, and another prompt cracking of revolvers.

A dozen men went down, but the rest rushed headlong around the house, arriving at the rear just in time to see Jesse James, mounted on Fleetwind, making a flying leap over one of the low buildings.

The outlaw's laugh came back to them as he disappeared for an instant, then there was a mad dash up



up hill, and horse and rider appeared in full view of the group of enraged natives.

The men were powerless to follow without several minutes' delay, and as another volley was being poured on them from the inside of the house, they made all possible speed to get out of the inclosure.

Jesse James did not even look behind him as he broke the open country.

By the time the men were in their saddles he was only a speck upon the horizon, making straight for the heart of the rugged Sierras.

"Thar's no use ter foller him! Thar ain't er piece of meself in Tucson kin ketch thet thar beast, an' besides we got an ounce of lead in my shoulder," growled the sheriff, disgustedly.

"You fellers was Jacks ter leave yer saddles!" commanded Sykes, as he helped two wounded men over the fence. "You'd hev caught him squar' an' fa'r ef you'd stuck ter yer posts!"

"We 'lowed yer was all bein' et up!" was the answer. "We reckoned we was needed."

The whole group were back over the fence now, their number reduced by about a dozen, and for just a minute there was a solemn silence.

Miss Miller and Star, with Gray between them, were the centre of the group, and there was a low outbuilding between them and their enemies.

"Let ther gal talk, men!" said the sheriff, finally. "How many people air thar inside, countin' men and women?" Miss Miller lifted a very pale face, but she answered rapidly:

"Nine men and two women. The women are Mrs. Ames and Mrs. Samuels, Jesse James' mother!"

"Have they treated you well?" asked Star, quickly. At the question Gray opened his eyes and stared at

"Very well," was the quick answer, as the young girl stooped again to adjust the rude bandage upon Gray's shoulder. "Jesse James is a fiend among men, but he is kind to women! His wife and mother love him!"

"I'm sorry for them, then," began Star, but the sheriff cut in roughly:

"They're as bad as he is! Well, men, we've got ter love our dead somehow or nother! Which one on yer drum up er posse of er hundred, or shell I go back

"I'll go, sheriff! You stan' guard hyar!" broke in Sykes, promptly, and the next minute he was clattering off up the road with another delegate accompanying him to hurry matters.

Once more the men divided, going to the front and rear of the house, while the group of injured huddled together behind the outbuilding and did what they could for each other. In half an hour the new posse arrived, bringing carts to transport both the dead and injured to the hospital at Tucson.

"Jess'll be back ter git his wife," chuckled the sheriff, as he ordered his men to surround the building. "An' he'll find us waitin' fer him! We won't move er foot from this hyar fence till them rascals hev surrendered!"

"I'll join you again, sheriff, just as soon as I see my friends and this lady cared for," said Star, as the carts moved off.

Just then a curious light showed for a minute against the sky in the direction in which the outlaws had gone; a puff of smoke shot up from the branches of a tree on the highest peak of the foothills.

In a second a rocket went up from the roof of the "Benson" dwelling and this was followed by a flash of colored light that could be seen all over the country.

"They're signaling, by Jove!" cried Star. "What the devil does it mean? Look out for 'em, sheriff! You'll be the biggest man in Arizona if you catch that rascal!"

"I'll ketch him, and ye kin gamble on —"

He was interrupted by a new sound that suddenly smote on their ears.

Bells were ringing, whistles were blowing and bedlam generally seemed to have broken loose in the heart of Tucson and every one knew in an instant that fire had broken out in the city.

A hundred and fifty of the leading citizens were surrounding the Benson dwelling, which meant that the town was at that moment badly in need of protection.

"Let 'er burn! I'll ketch ther James gang or die!" growled the sheriff, after a moment's hesitation. "I reckon now that thar's a trick of that rascal's, too! Them two sinners I see in the barroom hev set fire ter ther town so as Jess kin come back and save his wimmin!"

"Yer right thar, sheriff! Thar comes ther rascal!" yelled Sykes, as he rose in his stirrups and pointed his whip at a distant object. On the very crest of a distant knoll Jesse James could be seen calmly seated upon his



horse, with his face turned toward the flag pole that adorned the roof of his own building.

"They'll signal him when we go," yelled Sykes again. "Curse ther devil! Must we stay hyar an' let our own houses burn up! Thar's women an' children back thar, sheriff, that need our protection!"

"Let all go who wants ter," said the sheriff, grimly. "I'll stay right hyar an' see this hyar thing through!"

The fire carts were already on their way and at his words nearly two-thirds of the posse made a break for the city, where the din of bells and whistles continued.

"Now, men, git back outer sight an' see what them outlaws will do!" ordered the sheriff, as he backed his horse behind the stables out of sight of the house.

"I reckon now they think that thar fire will take us all back hot foot, so it might be possible ter fool ther rascals!"

"Thar goes ther signal ag'in!" broke in one of the men as he finished; then the rest of the posse skulked back close to the fence and waited.

Two rockets were sent up and then there was a silence of several minutes, in which the men sat on their horses sullenly and watched a cloud of thick, black smoke rise from one particular spot and spread all over Tucson.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OUTDONE.

When Star had left Gray and the other injured men at the make-shift hospital, he turned to Miss Miller in concern, but the young lady had already decided her course of action.

"I'll stay here and nurse him!" she said, decidedly.

Star then left her, and was soon in the center of the scene of conflagration.

Seven houses in all were blazing, and men, women, and children were skurrying about, carrying water in the hope of preventing its spreading any farther.

Men cursed as they worked, for they were satisfied that the James gang was responsible for the deed, and they were already planning how they should have revenge.

"I'm not so sure it's the James gang," said Star, as he found himself working beside the mayor of Tucson. "I'd sooner think it was some of Dan Elkins' friends——"

A howl from the crowd interrupted the sentence, and

the voice of Bob Skyes could be heard above the crackling of the conflagration:

"Ther jail is afire! Hi, thar! Whar's ther mayor?"

"I told you so!" muttered Star, as the two made break in that direction. "They're trying to get Elkins out just as sure as shooting!"

The smoke was so thick around the jail that they could not get very near it, but as the crowd swarmed in that direction several revolvers began cracking.

"Git back thar!" roared a voice that Star recognized instantly as belonging to Bill Howard. "Ther walls a fallin'! Git back thar, you loons! Turn the hose p ther fools, Jim, ef they come any nearer!"

A tremendous stream of water accompanied the word, and as it cut through the smoke, the detective caught a glimpse of Elkins and Howard, standing on the jail steps with a shower of sparks and embers falling around them.

There was another crack of pistols, for more than one of the natives had caught sight of the two men. Then there was a rush for the steps of the burning building.

Dan Elkins dashed back into the jail and out of a rear window, blowing three men, who tried to catch him, he jumped, into eternity, and plunging ahead recklessly.

Howard stumbled and fell with a bullet in his ankle and would have been roughly handled if the whole side of the frame building had not collapsed at that minute.

After that every one was too busy with the flames to think of the outlaws, but four hours later, when the ruins were cooling, they were all busily at work searching for their bodies.

Star had worked like a beaver, but when his services were no longer needed, he rushed back to the hospital for a report of Gray's condition.

"Doing well and being nursed like a baby by his sweet heart," was the news. Then he set off to find a hotel and a little refreshment.

As he was coming from a chophouse he met the sheriff and his men riding back with disappointed faces to view the ruins of their city.

"Did Jesse come back?" was his first question, although he hardly needed to ask it.

The sheriff shook his head and put up his revolver before he answered.

"They've been signalin' all the afternoon," he said, thoughtfully. "Fust by rockets an' fire, an' then by shots!"

They were within a block of the burned jail, when



streams of water were still flowing. Neither Dan Elkins nor Bill Howard had been found in the ruins, in spite of the fact that there were several charred bodies found.

The night was a particularly dark one, and as the posse rode toward the Benson dwelling they kept their horses well in hand and one finger upon the triggers of their weapons.

"Thar's Jim Thompson! I left him on guard!" muttered the sheriff, as a solitary horseman joined them, just before they reached their destination.

"Thar ain't been a sound nuther inside nor out," reported Jim. "It's as quiet as ther grave all around ther place!"

They had reached the shadow of the outbuildings now and not a sound had greeted them. The house and grounds were as dark and still as though they had been vacated.

Suddenly the group of horsemen heard the house door open and close distinctly.

"There they come! It's Mrs. James and the outlaw's mother!" muttered Star.

The sheriff urged his horse forward, with the posse following him, and just abreast of the open gate he saw the two figures.

"Throw up yer hands and surrender!" he roared, reining his horse close to the gate. "I'll arrest yer if yer do me wimmin!"

There was a frightened scream and both figures started to run, but the sheriff promptly turned into the yard and cutting spurs to his horse galloped half way across the enclosure.

This was apparently what was wanted, for the two figures wheeled suddenly, and the next second two pistols cracked and the sheriff reeled and fell from his saddle.

"They've shot him! Come back, boys! The whole thing is a trick!" yelled Star, backing his horse away from the gate.

"Them are hell-cats fer sartin! Ther sheriff was er cool ter chase 'em!" muttered one of the other riders, but as the sheriff was yelling for help he ventured into the yard after him. The rest followed until they were all in about Star. Not a sound could be heard, for the women had gone back into the house and closed the door after them.

"I reckon he's done fer, boys! Hist him inter ther saddle, an' one ev yer lead him home," ordered the fellow

who had gone to the sheriff's rescue; then, when this had been done, they all withdrew again to a safe distance and waited.

The hours passed slowly, with the horses growing restless, and at exactly midnight the sound of a hoofbeat could be heard in the distance.

Star whispered an order, and the men deployed again, keeping close to the fence or skulking in the bushes. Another and another hoofbeat followed, coming from different directions, and at last a light appeared in one window of the dwelling.

Suddenly Mrs. James opened the window and put her head out fearlessly, holding a lamp and shading it with her hand in order to scan the inclosure.

Star moved a little nearer, and as he did so he heard the breathing of a badly-winded horse just a little distance behind him.

Thinking it was one of his own party, he did not turn his head.

The click of a pistol hammer suddenly startled him, and with the instinct of self-preservation he lay flat on the saddle, while a bullet whizzed over his head, cutting a hole through his hat brim.

Star wheeled his horse, discharging his pistol as he did so, and in a second the sheriff's men put spurs to their horses and came from all directions.

As they did so a volley of shots came from the windows and the bushes, the door of the house opened and closed, and there was the sound of innumerable hoofbeats.

"It's Jess! They're skulking in the bushes!" yelled Star.

"It's ther sheriff! Kill him! Riddle him, boys!" yelled another voice.

Dark forms had sprung up like magic, and the sheriff's posse, which numbered thirty, was taken at a disadvantage, for they had been scattered in twos and could not possibly get together.

Star fought like a demon, emptying two revolvers at once, and the sheriff's men rained hot shot and did some extraordinary riding, dashing half way around the inclosure and then wheeling suddenly and pouring their bullets into the faces of their enemies.

Fifteen minutes from the beginning of the fray the last pistol shot sounded, and Star found himself standing in the road beside a pile of dying horses.



The sheriff's men were still getting in the inclosure, and at the rear of the building, but there was not a sound by which he could judge the whereabouts of the outlaws.

Suddenly there was a stealthy step near him, and he dropped down behind the horses just in time to escape the eye of Jesse James himself, who was stealing toward the gateway.

"Sh! Go easy, Jess! I ain't sure the boys hev got 'em all!" whispered a cautious voice. "Great snakes! What a pile of horseflesh! Thar must be six on 'em, cap'n! Lucky fer yer thet thar beast Fleetwind wasn't in this hyar scrimmage."

A chuckle followed and Jesse James leaped over a dead horse within twenty feet of the detective, who was hiding and cursing the luck that had left him in possession of two empty revolvers.

Crawling out from behind the horses, he waited until the outlaw was admitted to the house, then skulked around to the rear of the building in time to see the last of the sheriff's men put spurs to his horse in order to escape an outlaw's bullet.

"That settles it! The game is up!" he muttered, as he dropped behind a bush. "I'm the only man left, and my weapons are empty!"

Five minutes later Mrs. James put her head out of the window again, and this time a dark figure gave her a low-toned order.

"Tell Jess ther cusses hev gone, every mother's son of 'em! They'll be back purty quick, an' half o' Tucson with 'em, so he'd better move, an' be quick about it!"

"Coming! Be sure there's no one near!" called the outlaw's wife. Then she withdrew her head and closed the window.

Star waited until Jesse James and his women folks rode out of the gate, accompanied by three stablemen and six burly outlaws.

It was the most exasperating moment in the detective's whole life, particularly as five minutes after they were out of sight he stumbled against a loaded pistol.

Going carefully around the inclosure he dispatched all the living horses, then began a search for the wounded men, whom he felt sure were hiding in the bushes.

Seven out of the thirty were dead, and three were injured, and he was working over them when another posse arrived from Tucson.

This party was a hundred strong, and they searched

the premises thoroughly, finding much of interest, little of value in the "Benson" dwelling.

By morning a score of them were once more miles away, following the tracks of Jesse James' marvelous horse, Fleetwind, but they returned a days later, without having seen the outlaw.

Marshal Simpson notified the owners where the was to be found, but it was a long time before he covered from the chagrin of having the famous rob escape him.

Gray got well in a few weeks, and promptly married Miss Miller, and they repaired to Tombstone on their wedding journey.

Gray's marriage took a good man from the ranks of Pinkerton men, but Star, after a short rest, kept up his chase, swearing to spend his entire life in the effort to punish the great criminal.

The people of Tucson soon rebuilt their city, but they were deeply humiliated to think that three such rascals had escaped them, but it was not long after that they had Bill Howard again in their clutches.

What sort of an understanding there was between James and Elkins gangs no one ever knew, but in any instance, at least, they played into each other's hands, though they were known the world over to be desperate rivals.

TO BE CONTINUED.

### LATEST ISSUES.

- 20—Jesse James in Disguise; or, The Missouri Outlaw Showman.
- 19—Jesse James at Bay; or, The Train Robbers' Trail.
- 18—The James Boys in St. Louis; or, The Mysteries of a City.
- 17—Jesse James' Cave; or, The Secret of the Dead.
- 16—Jesse James on the Mississippi; or, The Duel at Midway.
- 15—Jesse James' Signal Code; or, The Outlaw Gang's Desperate Strategy.
- 14—Jesse James in New Orleans; or, The Man in the Domino.
- 13—Jesse James in Chicago; or, The Bandit King's Bold Play.
- 12—Jesse James' Close Call; or, The Outlaw's Last Rally in Southern Wyoming.
- 11—Jesse James Among the Moonshiners; or, The Train Robbers' Trail in Kentucky.
- 10—Jesse James' Double; or, the Man from Missouri.
- 9—Jesse James at the Throttle; or, The Hold-Up at the Man's Ditch.
- 8—Jesse James' Daring Deed; or, The Raid on the Ridge Jail.
- 7—Jesse James, Rube Burrows & Co.
- 6—Jesse James in Wyoming; or, The Den in the Black Hills.
- 5—Jesse James' Oath; or, Tracked to Death.

Back numbers always on hand. If you cannot get our publications from your newsdealer, five cents a copy will bring them to you, by mail, postpaid.



# YOUR OPINIONS OF FAMOUS MEN.

Grand Prize Contest



22 VALUABLE PRIZES  
GIVEN AWAY.

Here is a chance for every reader of **JESSE JAMES WEEKLY**.

Boys, you have all heard of the plucky little Kansan who has been making himself famous on the other side of the world.

What do you think of him?

What characteristics do you see in his face?

What has he done, anyway?

What do you think is the best thing he ever did?

The boys who can best answer such questions applying to any famous American, known for his brave deeds, will win handsome prizes.

Here is the plan of one of the most novel contests ever placed before the American boys.

Look up what interesting facts you can find about any famous American. Then write them out in your own words, stating your own opinion of him, his appearance, and the particular achievement which pleases you the most. The first prize will be awarded to the person sending in the most interesting and best written article; the next best will win the second prize, and so on. It makes no difference how short they are, but no contribution must be longer than 500 words.

## LOOK AT THE PRIZES.

### TWO FIRST PRIZES

The two who send us the most interesting and best written articles will each receive a first-class Camera, complete with achromatic lens, and loaded with six exposures each. Absolutely ready for use. For square pictures  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$  inches; capacity six exposures without reloading; size of camera  $4\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} \times 5$  inches; weight 15 ounces; well made, covered with grain leather and handsomely finished.

### FIVE SECOND PRIZES

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a "Sterling" Magic Lantern Outfit, together with 72 admission tickets and a large show bill. Each lantern is 10 inches high, 10 inches in diameter, with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch plano-complex condensing lens and a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch double complex objective lens. Uses kerosene oil only.

### FIVE THIRD PRIZES

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a Handsome Pearl Handled Knife. These knives have each four blades of the best English steel, hardened and tempered. The handle is pearl, the lining brass, and the bolsters German silver. For ten next best descriptions, ten sets of the latest and most entertaining Puzzles and Novelties on the market, numbering three puzzles each, including Uncle Isaac's Pawnshop Puzzle; the Magic Marble Puzzle and the Demon Outfit.

This Contest closes December 1. All contributions must be in by that date.

## SEND IN YOUR ARTICLES AT ONCE, BOYS.

We are going to publish all of the best ones during the progress of the Contest.

We will have to reserve to ourselves the right of judging which article has the most merit, but our readers know that they may depend upon Street & Smith, and on their absolute fairness and justice in conducting Contests. This one will be no exception to the rule.

## REMEMBER!

Whether your contribution wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with the name of the writer.

To become a contestant for the prize you must cut out the **Character Contest Coupon**, printed in this issue. Fill it out properly, and send it to **JESSE JAMES WEEKLY**, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your article. No contribution will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

### COUPON.

"JESSE JAMES WEEKLY" CHARACTER CONTEST No. 1.

Date.....1901

Name .....

City or Town.....

State .....



## ABOUT FAMOUS MEN.

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During the progress of the Prize Character Contest announced in this issue, space will be devoted to the publication of the best articles sent in by our readers. I know what our readers can do in this direction, as the following articles sent us from time to time will show. So send in your articles at once.

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### General Sherman and His March to the Sea.

(Written by Alfred Corley, 16 years old, Boston, Mass.)

General Sherman is my hero. My father was in his army when he made his celebrated March to the Sea, so I send you an account of it. My father has read this article and says it is correct.

I know the Southerners think that General Sherman was cruel, the way he burned up houses and farms and allowed his men to steal cattle and other live stock. But I do not think that was cruel, because it had to be done. He was a fighter from the word "Go." My father has told me that once, soon after the war began, when General Sherman was in command of the Department of the Cumberland, he was asked how many men he needed, and he replied: "Two hundred thousand to finish the war in this section." This statement was taken up by the newspapers, and everybody said he was insane. But he knew what he was talking about.

Well, to tell you about the March to the Sea. Everybody knows that General Sherman was fighting against General Hood. He had 60,000 men under him. Sherman had captured Atlanta, Georgia, but was in danger of being cut off from his supplies by Hood. The Union army was 300 miles from Nashville, the point where his food was stored. Of course, it was impossible to carry many days' provisions for 60,000 men, and as he was in the enemy's country, he could get nothing from the people around Atlanta, and all his supplies came along the one road he had captured from the Confederates.

Hood, therefore, flung his army around on this road at various points between Sherman and his base, and Sherman soon saw his danger.

The Confederates thought they had him sure, and they were going to starve him out.

Then Sherman decided on a new move, which, my father says, was the grandest and boldest move that ever occurred to a man in war.

This was nothing else than to give up Atlanta, to give

up all supplies from the North and to dash into enemy's country. He was going to depend on the country itself for supplies because there had been no battle fought there, so there was plenty of forage.

He was going with his whole army into the very interior of the Confederacy, where he would be cut from communication with every other Union army. Of course, he could expect no help from Grant or the Government, and he would have no news from them for a month. No such undertaking had ever been attempted before.

General Grant did not think much of the plan at first, and President Lincoln was opposed to it. President Lincoln left it with Grant, and he finally consented.

The first thing that Sherman did was to destroy the railroad in his rear, from Atlanta northward. Then he burned Atlanta and started for the sea on the 15th of November, 1864. The army was divided into two columns, with the cavalry kept distinct.

As Grant had predicted, Hood at once turned northward, as Sherman started south; but Sherman did not know this and had to take every precaution against pursuit and surprise.

To Grant and to all the North, Sherman's army was called the "Lost Army," and every one was worried about it.

On the 10th of December the army came to the defenses of Savannah, after having covered the entire distance without having anything more than a skirmish with the enemy.

He had to fight to get in Savannah, but he captured it on the 22d of December, and this was the telegram sent to the President: "I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition; also about 25,000 bales of cotton."

The message reached Lincoln on Christmas Eve and was published in the Northern newspapers on Christmas Day. There was great rejoicing in the North, and Sherman became one of the great heroes of the war.



## The Winner of the Most Famous American Naval Battle.

(Written by Paul Wilson, 15 years old, Detroit, Mich.)

I read in a book a little while ago that the English looked upon John Paul Jones as a pirate. I don't see how they make that out. I think he was one of the bravest men that ever lived, and just because he fought for more than one country doesn't prove that he was a pirate. Those who call him a pirate mention the time that he landed from his ship the *Ranger* on the Scotch shore during the Revolutionary War with the intention of seizing the Earl of Selkirk, but found him departed. The family plate was taken by his lieutenant, but they tried to prevent this robbery, and on his arrival in France he wrote to Lady Selkirk, promising to make amends for the depredations of his lieutenant. In the list of the prizes he purchased the unfortunate family plate, and at his own personal expense returned it to the Selkirks. Doesn't this prove that Jones was not a pirate, and it was only a single instance of his sense of honor.

It was on the 14th of August, 1778, that Captain Jones set sail from France with five vessels, including the American ship, *Alliance*. Jones' ship was the *Poor Richard*, which had been used in the India trade. It was in a dilapidated condition, as were most of his other vessels. The crew consisted of sailors of nearly every nationality, Americans being in the minority.

Captain Jones resolved to sail around the British islands, but at Cape Clear two of the smaller vessels parted with him, and furthermore he was greatly annoyed by the insubordination of Landais, the commander of the *Alliance*.

Sailing southward Jones suddenly encountered the Baltic fleet off Flamborough Head.

He immediately prepared for action. A most remarkable combat followed between the *Serapis*, a British frigate of 44 guns, and the *Poor Richard*, Jones' vessel.

The night was clear, and a beautiful moon shed its pale light on the scene. The shore was swarming with spectators. The sea was tranquil.

After several movements on the part of the British captain, the *Poor Richard* attempted a coming to close quarters. Two large eighteen pounders exploded in her gun room, causing a great loss of men and material. This gave the *Serapis* a decided advantage, besides being better constructed and better equipped. The English broadsides greatly damaged the rotten hull of the *Poor Richard*.

After several ineffectual attempts, Jones grappled his antagonist. So near were the two ships that the guns of the one touched the sides of the other. Every discharge shattered the timbers of the *Poor Richard* in a terrible manner. The American sailors climbed the masts, and with hand grenades and light arms worked great havoc on the deck of the *Serapis*, and at half-past ten Captain Pearson, the English commander, surrendered.

The battle had lasted three hours, and may be justly reckoned as one of the most brilliant feats of the Ameri-

can navy. The loss of the *Poor Richard* was about one hundred and fifty, and the British captain reported one hundred and seventeen killed.

Jones' ship being riddled by the enemy's shot, and having caught fire, he removed from her with his prisoners and his men to the *Serapis*. The *Countess*, another British frigate, was also captured in this encounter by the *Pallas*, one of the vessels of Jones' squadron.

Jones sailed for the coast of Holland, and was enthusiastically greeted on his landing. He was presented with a gold-mounted sword by the French King, Louis XVI., with the inscription on its blade:

"Louis XVI., the rewarder of the strong, protector of the vindicated sea."

Jones left for America in 1780, in the month of October. Here he received a warm reception from every quarter, and Congress gave him the permission to accept the cross of military merit tendered him by the King of France.

## A Celebrated Fighter.

(Written by Charles Gorham, 17 years old, Chelsea, Mass.)

One of the most brilliant heroes of the War of 1812 was Thomas McDonough, who has always been my hero. The incident that I remember the best in reading about him occurred in the port of Gibraltar when McDonough was lieutenant of the American frigate *Siren*. It showed his wonderful daring, and also illustrated the determination evinced by the officers of the young navy.

An American merchantman anchored in the neighborhood of the *Siren*, and she had been here but a short time when a boat from a British frigate was seen to board her, and soon after pull off with one of the men of the brig.

McDonough's suspicions were aroused, and on inquiry confirmed. An American citizen had been claimed and impressed. On the instant, just as the boat with the prisoner reached the British vessel, McDonough was alongside and rescued the captive, bearing him away to the *Siren*.

The next incident, immediately followed, was the arrival of the British captain, loudly demanding from the lieutenant how he dared to take a man from a boat of his majesty's vessel. To this McDonough answered that he was responsible to his superior officer, and that the question should be addressed to him.

The Englishman thereupon threatened to take the man by force, and haul the frigate alongside the *Siren*, which carried only sixteen guns. The lieutenant answered that he supposed it possible for him to sink the vessel, but as long as she was afloat the man would not be surrendered.

"You are very young and indiscreet, young man," said the captain. "Suppose I had been in the boat, what would you have done?"

"I would have taken the man or lost my life."

"What, sir! would you attempt to stop me if I were now to attempt to impress men from that brig?"



"I would; and to convince yourself I would, you have only to make the attempt."

The Englishman thereupon left the vessel, and when he was seen making in the direction of the brig, McDonough was in pursuit in a boat of armed men.

The English officer returned to his vessel, and Captain Smith, on hearing the circumstances, approved of the conduct of his lieutenant.

After the conclusion of the cruise in the Mediterranean, McDonough returned home to immortalize his name on Lake Champlain.

On the breaking out of the second war with England, the British general, Sir George Prevost, forgetting the fate of Burgoyne, attempted an invasion of the United States from Canada. He crossed into New York with twelve thousand troops, and marched against Plattsburg, defended by General Macomb, with fifteen hundred men, and several bodies of militia.

Lake Champlain was defended by McDonough with four large vessels and ten small gunboats, mounting in all eighty-six guns, and manned by eight hundred sailors.

The British fleet on the lake was superior in numbers and men to the American squadron. It was commanded by Captain Downie, and mounted ninety-five guns, being manned by over one thousand seamen. McDonough drew up his vessels in Plattsburg Bay, and awaited the enemy.

In the beginning of September they began their movements. On the fourth the two hostile fleets commenced their fire. The battle was bloody and destructive, owing to the calmness of the water, which allowed a deliberate and sure aim. The British commander was killed in the commencement of the engagement. Three British gunboats were sunk, and the others were all mastless. The American squadron also received great injuries.

According to the expression of McDonough himself, "There was not a mast in either squadron that could stand to make sail on. The lower rigging, being nearly all shot away, hung down as though it had just been placed over the mastheads."

During the battle in the bay the land forces of the British made three desperate attacks upon the American works around Plattsburg, but were each time repulsed. After the destruction of their fleet utter despondency took possession of them, and they abandoned the siege and returned to Canada.

### A Famous Indian Chief.

(Written by Paul Thompson, Bloomington, Ill.)

Tecumseh, the Shawnee Indian chief, is not exactly my hero, but he certainly was one of the wisest Indian chiefs that ever lived. He was the last real royal forest king.

What a scheme it was that he and his brother, "The Prophet," conceived of, a grand federation of all the Indian tribes west of the Alleghanies.

It was during the War of 1812, and his plan was to get the British on his side, and then drive the whites back beyond the mountains.

The years from 1806 to 1811 were spent in perfecting their powers—"the Prophet" by his assumed character of one especially endowed by the Great Spirit, and Tecumseh by his remarkable gifts of tongue—both coming almost supreme in their influence with the Shawnees and the restless portion of the Wyandots, Kickapoos, Delawares, Ottowas, Senecas, Pottawatomies and Chippewas.

In William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Northwest Territory, the wily chiefs found a most vigilant and sagacious enemy to their designs; but no art or artifice could thwart the purposes of the brothers.

Summoned by Harrison to a council at Vincennes (July 27, 1811), Tecumseh attended with an imposing array of warriors, and in a speech of great power, openly avowed his designs of an Indian Confederacy, whose purposes were to dictate terms to the whites.

From this conference, with twenty followers, the noted Shawnee started on a pilgrimage to the Southern tribes, to secure their adhesion to the confederation.

Sam Dale, the Mississippi ranger, was present in disguise, at the grand council in the Creek country, Tookahatchie (Oct., 1811), and heard the memorable speech delivered by the conspirator to the assembled warriors—over 5,000 Creeks, Choctaws and Cherokees.

The Prophet having remained at Tecumseh's headquarters on the Wabash (Prophetstown), from whence the Shawnee had repeatedly refused to move at the order of the Federal Government, had resolved there to make a stand, and oppose Harrison's attempt to force peace. The battle of Tippecanoe ensued (Nov. 7, 1811) the savages were signally defeated, and the Prophet's power broken. Tecumseh was then still absent on his mission among the Southern and Western tribes, and was exceedingly incensed at the precipitancy of his brother, for it almost ruined his plans.

Indeed, it is to be presumed that had not the war with Great Britain followed the Shawnee chief would have succumbed to destiny and removed with his tribe to more western regions; but the war again gave him hope for then the British would sustain him, and by their powerful co-operation he might yet drive the whites, at least, out of all the region west of the Sciota.

War was declared by our Government June 19, 1812. Early in July Tecumseh was on the war trail. Heading for Detroit, he co-operated in the British movement against that post, which General Hull's cowardice lost to his country (August 16). The British commander, General Brock, publicly decorated Tecumseh with a red sash in honor of his savage allies' services. This sash the great Shawnee transferred to Roundhead, chief of the Wyandots—a politic stroke of cunning. He thus appeared to the Indians as above rewards.

Tecumseh fell in 1813 at the Battle of the Thames when he was fighting with the British. Tecumseh's men, stationed in a swamp, were hunted out with the bayonet and saber, and the great chief perished there.

With Tecumseh perished the last hope of resistance to the white man's power. No longer could even the most blind and devoted warrior be persuaded to confidence in a resort to arms. They bowed to fate when Tecumseh fell, and ever, since then, has the Shawnee name been distinguished. The tribe to-day, I believe, is extinct.



# HUNTING AND TRAPPING DEPARTMENT.

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We are pleased to announce a Special Department for JESSE JAMES WEEKLY, which, we feel sure, will interest all of our readers who have a love for hunting or trapping. This department will be found brimful of information and ideas on these subjects, and will contain, in addition, a special column which will be devoted to answering any questions our readers may ask us. Address all communications to the "Hunting and Trapping Department."

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## HOW TO MAKE A HUNTING SPEAR.

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Did you ever try to spear a fish or a snake or a frog? Spear-fishing is one of the keenest sports you can think of, and after you get a little practiced in throwing the spear you can catch quantities of fish with it.

In this article we will tell you how to make one of the simplest and, at the same time, one of the best spears you can find.

Take any straight stick or pole seven or eight feet long. It is to be made into a shaft so trim it down and take the weight occasionally by balancing it in the hand. When you have trimmed it down to about an inch in thickness, it should be laid aside and work commenced on the barbs for the head of the spear.

In place of the ordinary single point generally used a spear has two points, with teeth on the inner side of each point, which makes it look something like a shark's mouth. And the teeth should point upward so that the fish will slide into the crotch easily enough, but when it comes to wriggle out it will be quite another matter.

The best thing for this purpose is some good hard, elastic material, such as split bamboo or cane. Very hard wood will also answer.

This will do for the spearheads. Now for the teeth. Cut two pieces of heavy iron wire and notch them into loops upon the inside of the spearheads. Then file each loop to a point.

After the two head pieces are notched and pointed they should be firmly bound to the spear points. Don't file the notches all the way up because you want to have an exposed surface where the points are bound to the pole.

Of course, before binding them they should be whittled, so that they will fit flat against the pole. There is danger of having the two spear points come too close together, so look out for that when you are binding them to the pole. They should resemble somewhat a letter V. A couple of small wedges driven in between the shafts of the points will diverge the latter, if found necessary. If a fish be struck by one of these weapons it is next to impossible for it to escape. The points being elastic, they lead apart suddenly as the spear strikes the fish's

body. When the fish is well caught there is an immense tension on the points, and it is held a secure prisoner. No matter how smooth and slimy the fish may be the barbs hold it fast, acting with even greater certainty than a hook, because it grasps the fish on both sides.

If you want to hunt for snakes, or other reptiles or frogs, you can use the same kind of a spear, but it should be made smaller.

The best way to fish with fish spears is to go out in a rowboat at night armed also with torches or lanterns. The light seems to dazzle the fish and also reflects from their shiny sides, showing where they are. You hold the spear partly in the water, moving it about steadily and cautiously.

When you discover a fish, move the spear until it is directly over its head and then jab down hard. You may not be successful the first time because it takes a steady hand and a quick eye. But after a little practice both in spearing and in learning where to fish you can have great fun.

## A UNIQUE SQUIRREL TRAP.

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This trap is sometimes called the toll gate trap from its resemblance to a toll gate. At this season of the year squirrels are at their liveliest, and besides being good eating their skins can always find a market.

The best place to trap squirrels is on a rail fence. There seems to be a fascination for them in running along a narrow strip of board. Perhaps they imagine it is a limb of a tree. And this trap is especially designed to be used on a rail fence, which accounts for another nickname it goes by, namely, the "squirrels' highway."

The best thing about it is that it can be made in a few minutes with the aid of a jackknife and a hatchet.

Take your hatchet and cut a forked stick a little higher than the fence. Drive it into the ground two feet from the fence until it is on a level with the latter.

Now get a plank three feet long and rest one end on the forked stick, letting the other end protrude some distance on the other side of the fence.



Select a heavy stick for the "deadfall"—that is, the part of the trap that is going to catch the squirrel. It should be almost as long as the plank, and when the trap is set, one end of the stick will be raised directly over the point of the fence where the squirrel will pass.

The point is to have the squirrel, in passing, loosen the catch that holds the stick up, when down will come the deadfall upon the shoulders of the victim.

The arrangement for holding the stick up and for setting off the trap are a little complicated, so read the following directions very carefully:

First, take two small forked sticks, sharpen the ends and drive them into splits made near the ends of the plank nearest the fence, with the corner of your hatchet.

Lay a crosspiece from one forked stick to the other, and tie a short string to the center of the cross stick.

Now choose a small thin stick, two feet long, to be called the trigger, and another one half a foot long. Lay the trigger on the plank, parallel to the deadfall, and fasten one end to the end of the deadfall farthest away from the fence. Cut a little notch in one end of the trigger and another notch in the end of the deadfall.

Tie the little half-foot stick in the middle with the string already mentioned, which is hanging from the cross stick.

Now insert the little stick between the two notches just mentioned, which, when done ought to raise the deadfall about six inches from the plank and the trigger about one inch.

Now your trap is made. The weight of the squirrel's foot upon the bottom bar, or trigger, will make the little stick which is suspended by a spring, fly loose from the notch. This, of course, will in turn let down the deadfall and the squirrel will be crushed.

There is only one thing the matter with the trap now. It is liable to sway. To prevent this and also to the deadfall in falling, there should be two upright guide sticks inserted in the plank at about the middle in the same way that the small crotches were inserted.

This trap is a most effective one and any one can make it if he will go to work carefully.

Following are some hints to be observed in making this trap:

Don't have your deadfall too long. It should not come nearer than three inches to the little crotches. If it does come nearer the trap will be much harder to set off, where the farther away it is the easier the trap will go off.

The trigger, on the other hand, should not be too short.

It should extend two inches beyond the edge of the plank and the notch in it should be made just where it passes the end of the plank.

The string also should not be too long. Just have it a few inches long, enough to tie the little stick with. When that is done there should not be more than an inch or two of string suspended.

The little stick that goes between the deadfall and the trigger should slant upward toward the deadfall at an angle of ninety degrees.

If your deadfall is light it may have to be raised higher to kill its victims, but the best thing to do in that case is to get a heavier stick, because then you won't have to readjust all your other parts.

## EXCHANGE COLUMN.

(Notice.—This column is free to all our readers. We cannot be responsible for transactions made through notices in this column. All offers must be strictly exchange offers, and "for sale" advertisements, or exchanges of fire-arms, explosives, or dangerous or worthless articles will be printed. Address all communications for this column to "Exchange Column.")

Following are a number of exchange notices which have been recently received for publication in this weekly:

**ICE SKATES.**—W. J. Krappe, 51 No. Willow St., Montclair, N. J., has a pair of all clamp ice skates to exchange for a pair of Indian clubs.

**BRACKET SAW.**—Frank Goble, 173 Amity St., Brooklyn, N. Y., 4th floor, front, will exchange a bracket saw and 40 foreign stamps for best offer of cigarette pictures. All offers answered.

**JESSE JAMES.**—G. Higgins, 118 North 4th St., Camden, N. J., has Jesse James stories from No. 5 to No. 20, several good books and other reading matter to exchange for a printing press and outfit. Self-inking preferred.

**PROGRAMMES.**—H. L. Hamilton, Box U, Paducah, Ky., would like to hear from collectors of theatre programmes.

**WATCH.**—John A. Mill, Washington, Pa., has a solid silver Geneva movement, open-faced half-jeweled watch to exchange for a typewriter. Parties wishing to exchange will have to send typewriter first.

**STAMPS.**—W. A. Murray, Waltham, Mass., will exchange 677 foreign and U. S. stamps for a violin, also a list of other articles for a boat or bicycle.

**READING MATTER.**—B. H. Alger, Waterville, Me., has \$35 worth of story papers to exchange for a good watch, a pair of opera glasses, books or best offer.

**BOYS' PAPERS.**—B. H. Simons, Amsterdam, N. Y., has five volumes of boys' papers, stamps, coins, books, novels, etc., to exchange for a printing press, or best offer.

**CIGARETTE CARDS.**—P. H. Miner, Elmira, N. Y., has cigarette cards, and a large number of five and ten cent notes to exchange for the best offer.

**BOXING GLOVES.**—Gus Lorey, 17 West Willow St., Oneonta, N. Y., has a set of boxing gloves, a gold fountain pen, about fifteen cloth and paper-bound books to exchange for a guitar or anything useful.

**CIGARETTE SLIPS.**—A. Shipman, 184 Chambers St., New York, has a lot of cigarette slips, a stamp album with star in it, no two alike, also three cigarette albums to exchange for best offer.

**BOYS' PAPERS.**—L. Reinhardt, 59 Canal St., Chicago, Ill., has a lot of boys' papers, one pair of roller skates, and a lot of novels to exchange for a self-inking printing press and outfit.

**BOYS' PAPERS.**—H. W. Schonewolf, 51 No. Willow St., Montclair, N. J., has a lot of boys' papers, and other reading matter, and a stamp album with foreign stamps to exchange for a pair of opera glasses, cigarette albums, or stamps not in his collection.

**TYPEWRITER.**—Clark E. Warren, Holly, N. Y., has a Eureka typewriter in good condition, to exchange for an electric steam engine, electric motor, or best offer.

**MAGIC LANTERN.**—W. A. Tisdale, Brookline, Mass., has a large magic lantern with 100 views, to exchange for a self-inking printing press with outfit.

**STAMPS.**—W. C. White, Bangor, Me., has U. S. and foreign stamps, stamp papers, coins, etc., to exchange for the nine cent U. S. postage stamps 1869 issue, or other rare U. S. stamps.

**POP CORN OUTFIT.**—Albert T. Martin, Bloomington, Ill., has a popcorn stand and outfit to exchange for a pair of dummies for the use of ventriloquism or best offer.

**STAMPS.**—Chas. O. Henbest, Marshall, Ill., has a collection of stamps to exchange for a typewriter. Will exchange sheets with collectors.

**TOY TELEPHONE.**—Thomas Crowley, 202 Madison St., New York, has a toy telephone about twenty feet long, an office printer and some type to exchange for a magic lantern or best offer.



# JESSE JAMES STORIES



Jesse James.

WE were the first publishers in the world to print the famous stories of the James Boys, written by that remarkable man, W. B. Lawson, whose name is a watchword with our boys. We have had many imitators, and in order that no one shall be deceived in accepting the spurious for

the real we shall issue the best stories of the James Boys, by Mr. Lawson, in a New Library entitled "The Jesse James Stories," one of our big five-cent libraries, and a sure winner with the boys. The first four issues are: "Jesse James, the Outlaw. A Narrative of the James Boys," "Jesse James' Legacy; or, The Border Cyclone," "Jesse James' Dare-Devil Dance; or, Betrayed by One of Them," "Jesse James' Black Agents; or, The Wild Raid at Bullion City."

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